

Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

September 8, 2006

**Michigan Hall of Justice Conference Center
Lansing, Michigan**



**A Joint Seminar and Webcast
of the State Court Administrative Office -
Child Welfare Services Division and the Michigan Judicial Institute**

Cosponsored by:

***Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice
State Court Administrative Office - Child Welfare Services Division
Michigan Judicial Institute***

This program is funded by a federal Children's Justice Act grant to the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice administered through the Michigan Department of Human Services, under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Administration of Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA 93.643, being section 107(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) as amended (42 USC 5101 *et seq.*); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended (42 USC 10601 *et seq.*) In addition, this is a joint project of the State Court Administrative Office and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, chaired by the Honorable Elizabeth A. Weaver, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Schedule

Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

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Michigan Hall of Justice
Lansing, Michigan

Agenda

8:30 - 9:00 am	Forum Registration
9:00 - 9:15 am	Welcome <i>Faculty:</i> Ms. Gloria Gillespie, Member, Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice
9:15 - 9:45 am	Welcome and Overview <i>Faculty:</i> Justice Maura D. Corrigan, Michigan Supreme Court
9:45 - 11:00 am	Successful Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Children Absent from Placement <i>Faculty:</i> Ms. Caren Kaplan, Director, Child and Family Protection, Child Welfare League of America
11:00 - 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am - 12:30 pm	Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS)/ Law Enforcement Collaboration <i>Faculty:</i> Ms. Jennifer Montague, MDHS Child Locator Analyst Ms. Audrey Walters, MDHS Child Locator Analyst Sgt. LeeAnn Koltz, Wayne County Warrant Enforcement Bureau
12:30 – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 – 2:30 pm	County Panels Highlighting Current and Innovative AWOLP Practices <i>Faculty:</i> Kent County Panel Genesee County Panel Saginaw County Panel Wayne County Panel
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 – 4:00 pm	Facilitated Discussion/Program Evaluation/Adjournment

Improving AWOLP Reporting

Marcus Dobek
Judicial Information Systems

Strategy

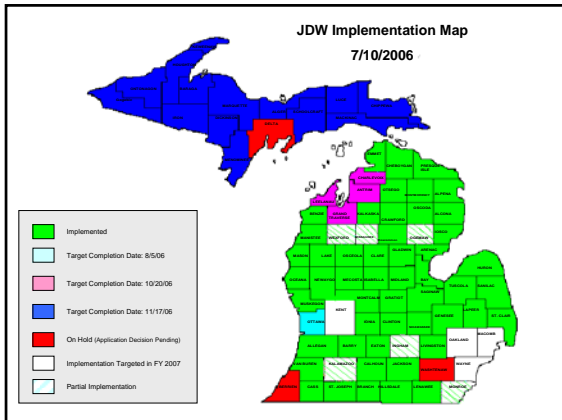
- Utilizing the State of Michigan's Data Warehouse, build a reporting mechanism that shares DHS' data from SWSS with data from trial courts.

What is a Data Warehouse?

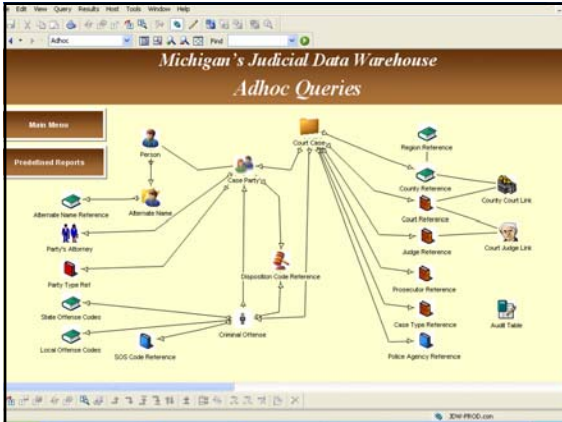
- A Data Warehouse is a structured collection of data from multiple sources that provides a consistent view of the data and a consistent set of tools for accessing the data.
- This is typically done by combining databases across an enterprise that includes both historical and current data.
- The currency of the data depends on the frequency of update required by the business owners.

Judicial Data Warehouse

- Currently, the Judiciary's 251 trial court locations are supported by 41 different case management systems. This creates a void in the knowledge about individuals involved in the Michigan Court system and restricts the ability to obtain detailed and statistical information;
- The data warehouse provides a Centralized Name Index, along with the associated detail data, which will improve the ability to report on individual case status and statistics of trial court activity;







Phases for Improved Reporting

- Phase I
 - Provide trial courts with access through the Judicial Data Warehouse of a report that provides AWOLP status children from the DHS data;
 - Trial courts would submit the status of children using the proposed form developed by SCAO;



Phases for Improved Reporting

- Phase II
 - AWOLP data is shared and loaded to an application on the Michigan Court Application Portal (MCAP);
 - The trial courts use a Web-based application to update the status of children;
 - AWOLP status data updated by trial court is returned to DHS;

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Michigan Court Application Portal - Microsoft Internet Explorer

http://courts.michigan.gov/efile/efile.asp

Michigan Court Application Portal

Michigan Supreme Court Intranet

Applications

Google

Applications

Change Password

Change your password on MyCourt

Help Desk

All error report

Issue Tracker

Jury Fees

Jury Fees

Visit frequently asked questions

St. Joe, Sell Our House: Homeowners call upon saint in slow market

Mark and Kristin Shout have found almost everything to sell from East Lansing home

Phases for Improved Reporting

- Phase III
 - Programmatically compare the data from DHS and trial courts, to reduce the number of updates required by trial courts;

Next Steps

- Kickoff meeting with DHS and SCAO staff is set for September 13th;
- Meeting will include business owners and technical staff;
- Objective will be to review data elements contained in the respective areas of the warehouse for DHS and Trial Courts;
- Identify data that needs to be shared or added to facilitate the improved reporting objectives;
- Develop an inter-agency data sharing agreement with DHS and SCAO.

Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

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Successful Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Children Absent from Placement

Faculty:

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This program is funded by a federal Children's Justice Act grant to the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice administered through the Michigan Department of Human Services, under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Administration of Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA 93.643, being section 107(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) as amended (42 USC 5101 *et seq.*); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended (42 USC 10601 *et seq.*) In addition, this is a joint project of the State Court Administrative Office and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, chaired by the Honorable Elizabeth A. Weaver, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Children Missing from Care

Successful Intervention Strategies

Caren Kaplan, Director
Child and Family Protection
Child Welfare League of America

Child Welfare League of America 9.8.06

Where do we start?

We start with the children, of course!

Children who live with
courage and dignity

Excerpt from "Shattered Lives"
by Camila Batmanhelidjh

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Defining Children Missing from Care

A child is considered *missing from care* if s/he is not in the physical custody of the child welfare agency or the person or institution with whom the child has been placed.

The whereabouts of the missing child may be *known* or *unknown*.

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Defining Children Missing from Care

Three discrete groups

- Those who leave care voluntarily without permission
- Those who are removed from care or not returned to care by someone without legal authority to do so
- Those children whose whereabouts are unknown to agency and this status is due to inattentiveness of the custodial agency

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Current State of Knowledge

- Dearth of research → recent interest
- Children who **run** from care most researched group
- Studies of missing children predominately focused on absences from birth families
- No examination of children 'lost in care'
- Law enforcement and child welfare are *learning by doing...* on the ground in *real time*

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Incidence and Prevalence - Runaways

- Measurement is illusive and multi-faceted
- Children in care > twice likelihood of runaway behavior (2.4% vs. 0.9%, AFCARS)
- 11% of foster children in care for one year attempted to run from placement (NSCAW, 2003)
- 25% of youth from runaway shelters came from foster or group homes (Bass, 1992)
- Almost half of children in foster/residential care have run at some point in time (United Kingdom, 1999)

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Incidence and Prevalence - Runaways

Impacted by:

- Age
- Gender
- Race and Ethnicity
- Whether child/youth has run previously
- Placement setting
- Permanency Plan

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Habitual Running


- No developing pattern of running behavior
- Most children go 'AWOL' only once - can be at great risk.
- Pattern of running may contribute to detachment from adults, school attendance and engagement in criminal activities
- Like most acts of initiation, the first voluntary, unauthorized absence from care is strong predictor of future running behavior (Ross, 2001).

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Reasons Children Run from Care


- Child-specific Reasons for Running
- System-specific Reasons for Running
 - Culture of home - structure and authority
 - Supports and services to the foster family
 - Other children in the home
 - Youth participation in establishing patterns and making decisions

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BEING PROACTIVE


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Comprehensive Agency Plan

- MOU's with law enforcement
- Statute and policy
- Confidentiality and info sharing
- Record keeping, data collection, and MIS


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Comprehensive Agency Plan


- Interjurisdictional monitoring
- Training requisites
- Protocols
- Oversight and evaluation

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PREVENTION


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Prevention of Missing from Care Episodes

- Preparing Children/Youth for Foster Placement
- Supports to and Education of Children in Care
- Placement Selection and Placement Stability
- Supports to and Training of Foster Parents
- Relationship Building and Maintenance with Birth Parents

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Prevention of Missing from Care Episodes

- Risk Assessment
- Provision of Necessary Services
- Prevention of Family Abduction
- Role of Information Technology in Prevention of Missing Episodes
- Capacity and Competence of those Mandated to Keep Children Safe

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RESPONSE

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Response to Children Missing from Care

Child Welfare Partnership with Law Enforcement

- Shared Definitions
- Joint Protocols
- Cross-Systems Training
- Shared Information Systems
- Confidentiality Protocols
- Jointly Prepared Procedures


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Response to Children Missing from Care

Child Welfare Practice


- Collaborate with Law Enforcement
- Establish single point of contact
- Notify personnel, birth parents, court
- Provide ongoing support to caregiver, birth family, foster family, other children in care

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RETURN and RESOLUTION

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Return and Resolution

Essential objectives re. child well-being:

- (1) gain an understanding of their reasons for going missing;
- (2) identify any placement related or other problems that may have prompted them to go; and
- (3) plan a response to these difficulties
- (4) monitor to assess satisfactory resolution

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Selected Observations

- In our failure to prevent youth from running, we are falling short of our mandate.
- There will always be some youth that run.
- Holistic approach is essential.
- Relationships are germane in all aspects of problem resolution.
- Perspective of youth must be the prevailing lens

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The System

Isn't Outside of Us...

It IS us!

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If It is Going to Change

WE

MUST

CHANGE

TOO

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The Children Have the Last Words

Excerpt from

*"Shattered Lives: Children who live
with Courage and Dignity"*

by Camila Batmanhelidjh

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For additional information

Child Welfare League of America:

Children Missing from Care: An Issue Brief (2004)

Proceedings of Expert Panel Meeting, 3/ 8-9/ 2004

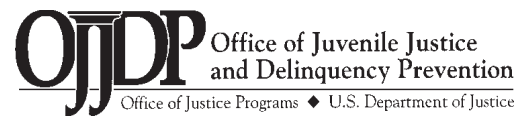
<http://www.cwla.org/programs/fostercare/childmiss.htm#proceedings>

CWLA Best Practice Guidelines: Children Missing from Care (2005)

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

http://www.missingkids.com/en_US/publications/NC162.pdf

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Children Missing From Care: The Law-Enforcement Response

Children Missing From Care:

The Law-Enforcement Response

**Thomas B. Smith
Kenneth Buniak
Lee Condon
Lee Reed**

2005

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www.missingkids.com**

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2005-MC-CX-K024 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®, 1-800-THE-LOST®, LOCATER™, and Picture Them Home® are registered service marks of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

The Children Missing From Care Project

In Fiscal Year 2004 the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) received a one-year grant, pursuant to the legislative authority of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, to improve the safety and well-being of children in out-of-home care.

The Children Missing from Care Project was initiated in response to the heightened awareness of the risk of harm faced by children who become missing from out-of-home care. Reasons for disappearances range from action by the child such as running away; actions of others such as abduction by a noncustodial parent, an acquaintance, or an unknown person; or inattentiveness of the custodial agency referred to in this guide as being “lost in care.”

The primary goal of this project is to provide comprehensive guidance to child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies with respect to monitoring the status of children in out-of-home care and responding effectively when a child is missing. A coordinated response by child welfare and law enforcement is crucial.

Through collaboration between representatives from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), CWLA, state clearinghouses, and other law-enforcement agencies, the recommendations and guidelines contained in this publication were developed. CWLA has developed a companion publication titled *CWLA Best Practice Guidelines: Children Missing From Care* for use by child-welfare agencies and their staff members.

Material outlined in this publication is intended to assist in strengthening collaboration between law-enforcement agencies and child-welfare authorities. Specific investigative guidelines have **not** been included in this guide; however, they are found in NCMEC’s *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management* available at the “More Publications” section of www.missingkids.com or by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Acknowledgments

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children thanks the authors, which include Director Kenneth Buniak of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse, Special Agent Supervisor Lee Condon of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Police Officer Lee Reed with the Juvenile Division of the Abilene (Texas) Police Department, and Lieutenant Thomas B. Smith with the Planning and Research Unit of the Collier County (Florida) Sheriff's Office. NCMEC also acknowledges the contributions of the individuals noted below in the design and development of this publication. The combined experience, skill, and expertise of these specialists along with the suggestions, modifications, and additions provided by our expert reviewers has led to the creation of a comprehensive resource document that should be of great value to all professionals who are involved in handling cases of children missing from out-of-home care.

Detective David Barnard
CID/Major Crimes Unit
King County Sheriff's Office
Kent, Washington

Judith Dunning
Statewide Coordinator for Missing Children
Illinois Department of Children and Families
Springfield, Illinois

Commander Roberta Bartik, Retired
Chicago Police Department
Chicago, Illinois

Elizabeth Yore
General Counsel
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Chicago, Illinois

Appreciation is also extended to our colleagues at the Child Welfare League of America including Shay Bilchik, President and Chief Executive Officer; Caren Kaplan, Director of Child and Family Protection; Millicent Williams, Director of Foster Care; and Susan Dougherty, Consultant.

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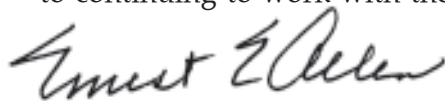
Foreword

For more than 20 years the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has worked closely with law-enforcement agencies, assisting in the search for missing children and raising awareness about ways to keep children safer. While most people know of our work to assist in the recovery of children missing from traditional homes and families, we are proud to also be a part of a larger effort addressing the issue of children missing from out-of-home care. This issue is not new, yet it did not gain national attention until 2001 when it was discovered a 4-year-old girl in Florida was missing from her foster home. Sadly this child could have been missing from care in any state across the country.

Distinguished as the nation's oldest and largest membership-based, child-welfare organization, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) has supported the efforts of child- and family-serving agencies since being founded in 1920. In Fiscal Year 2004 CWLA was the recipient of a grant addressing the needs of those children in out-of-home care. It was an honor to be invited to join CWLA in responding to this very important issue.

The primary goal of the collaboration between CWLA and NCMEC is to continue to facilitate the coordination of the specialized skills of child-welfare and law-enforcement professionals. Both are so clearly needed to successfully respond to cases of children missing from care. We have a responsibility to all children, and, with that in mind, we began developing this guide for policymakers within law-enforcement agencies. This guide is a companion to both the CWLA's newly published guide titled *CWLA Best Practice Guidelines: Children Missing From Care* and NCMEC's *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management*. That NCMEC guide outlines a standard of practice for law-enforcement officers handling missing-child cases and includes definitive checklists for investigating cases of children who are missing from a home, care, or any other setting. That guide is given to thousands of law-enforcement officers annually and is the fundamental text for NCMEC's approximately week-long *Responding to Missing and Abducted Children (ReMAC)* training course. The purpose of these guides and enhanced law-enforcement training on this issue is to offer guidance to child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies about monitoring children in state custody and responding when a child is missing.

While we have come a long way since 2001 in our partnership with child-welfare agencies, much remains to be done to help safeguard even more children. We commend CWLA for taking the lead in addressing this issue and look forward to continuing to work with them on behalf of all children.



Ernest E. Allen

President and Chief Executive Officer

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Introduction

The term “missing child” may bring about great fear in any community as it tends to make people think of abduction and possibly even death. Fortunately most disappearances do not involve abductions¹ and 94.9 percent of children who are reported missing to NCMEC are found.²

There are many different reasons why children become missing. In general a child is considered a **runaway** if he or she has voluntarily left a legal residence. A child is considered **abducted** if someone without legal authority or permission of the custodian takes the child or fails to return the child at an agreed-upon time. A child may be abducted by a family member or nonfamily member. A child is considered **missing from care** if he or she is not in the physical custody of the child-welfare agency or person or institution with whom the child has been placed. A child is considered **lost in care** if his or her whereabouts are unknown to the child-welfare agency **and** this status is due to the inattentiveness of the agency.³

Regardless of why a child is missing or where a child is missing from, all missing children are at risk and each missing-child case needs immediate investigation and entry into the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer and the state law-enforcement system. When children are missing from care, law-enforcement and child-welfare agencies need to work in partnership to quickly find and return that child to care. This guide offers information about adopting such partnerships in jurisdictions where they do not already exist and reviewing currently existing partnerships to identify needed enhancements in jurisdictions where these partnerships are already in place.

For information about investigative techniques recommended for missing-children cases in general and specific needs in various types of missing-child cases – from runaways to family abductions to nonfamily abductions – please view, download, and/or order *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management* from the “More Publications” section of www.missingkids.com or order a free hard copy by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

¹See table detailing categories of missing children on page 2 of this guide.

²2004 Key Facts. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, page 1.

³Julie Gwin and Eve Malakoff-Klein, Editors. *CWLA Best Practice Guidelines: Children Missing From Care*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America, 2005, page 5 [hereafter *CWLA Best Practice Guidelines*].

Nature of the Problem

Incidence

Statistical information regarding missing children varies from source-to-source depending on many factors including the definitions used and the source of the data being examined.

Often statistical information is gathered from the NCIC databases. It is important, however, to remember that NCIC only captures information about missing children who are reported to law enforcement **and** subsequently entered into the NCIC missing-person database by the investigating law-enforcement agency. Consequently statistics based on NCIC numbers do not reflect the actual number of children who are missing since it is believed a significant number of incidents are not reported to law enforcement and/or are not entered into the NCIC database.

Therefore a review of additional resources is needed to gain a better understanding of the magnitude of the problem. While there are no national resources tracking the number of children missing from care, more general numbers from the second *National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART-2)* helps us better understand the number of missing children in general. In addition statistics from *The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Report* gives us an understanding of the number of children in care in the United States.

The *NISMART-2* study was conducted in 1999 and is based on a total of 16,111 households surveyed about their experiences with children believed to be or reported missing in their family. In the survey adult caretakers identified 31,787 such children. When these data were rated to reflect the Census-based United States population of children age 18 and younger, the estimates noted on the next page were derived.⁴ In the following table Caretaker Missing Children represents a child whose whereabouts was unknown and the caretaker was alarmed and tried to locate the child. Reported Missing Children represents children reported missing to law enforcement or a missing children's agency for purposes of locating a child.⁵

⁴"National Estimates of Missing Children: An Overview." *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, page 2. To view the entire bulletin and access bulletins detailing other aspects of this study visit www.missingkids.com and click on the "FAQs and Statistics" and "How many missing children are there?" links.

⁵*Id.*, page 5.

Category	Estimated Total*	Rate per 1,000 in U.S. Child Population
Caretaker Missing Children	1,315,600	18.8
Reported Missing Children	797,500	11.4

*This estimate represents a 95-percent confidence interval indicating if the study were repeated 100 times, 95 of the replications would produce estimates within a 95-percent confidence interval for the noted numbers and percentages. Those ranges are respectively 1,131,100 to 1,500,100 and 16.1 to 21.4 percent for Caretaker Missing Children and 645,400 to 949,500 and 9.2 to 13.5 percent for Reported Missing Children.⁶

The table below reflects the estimated total number of children by episode type.

Episode Type	Total Number of Children With Episodes	Percent in Row Counted as Caretaker Missing	Percent in Row Counted as Reported Missing
Nonfamily Abduction	58,200	57	21
Family Abduction	203,900	57	28
Runaway/ Throwaway	1,682,900	37	21
Missing Involuntarily, Lost, or Injured	198,300	100+	31
Missing Benign Explanation	374,700	100+	91

Note these estimates cannot be added or combined. All estimates are rounded to the nearest 100.
+ By definition all children with episodes in this category are caretaker missing.⁷

The most recent source of national data about children in out-of-home care is from *The AFCARS Report* offering a snapshot of children in foster care on September 3, 2002. The report findings are based on data collected from the period between October 1, 2001, and September 30, 2002.⁸ Key findings of that data are detailed in the following charts.

⁶*Id.*

⁷*Id.*, page 10.

⁸*The AFCARS Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb, accessed February 3, 2005.

Ages of Children in Foster Care

Younger than 1 Year	5%	24,290
1 to 5 Years	24%	128,947
6 to 10 Years	22%	116,802
11 to 15 Years	30%	158,290
16 to 18 Years	17%	92,091
19 and Older	2%	10,321

Placement Settings of Children in Foster Care

Pre-Adoptive Home	5%	24,960
Foster Family Home (Relative)	23%	124,036
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	46%	243,505
Group Home	9%	45,464
Institution	10%	54,472
Supervised Independent Living	1%	5,676
Runaway	2%	9,459
Trial Home Visit	4%	18,809

Lengths of Stay for Children in Foster Care

Less Than 1 Month	5%	23,948
1 to 5 Months	18%	94,399
6 to 11 Months	16%	84,707
12 to 17 Months	12%	62,036
18 to 23 Months	8%	45,008
24 to 29 Months	7%	36,236
30 to 35 Months	5%	27,196
3 to 4 Years	13%	70,754
5 Years or More	16%	87,694

Risk Assessment

While all missing children are at risk and require immediate report-taking and entry of information about the child into NCIC and the state law-enforcement system, decisions about specific resources used by investigator's with missing-child cases should be determined by the level of potential risk to the child, when it may be assessed.

With regard to runaways these children are at significant risk of becoming crime victims and later possibly involved in criminal activity themselves. Children who have left a caregiver are typically vulnerable. Regardless of the reasons for leaving they often become dependent on risky behavior for survival. For example they may be recruited by exploiters to engage in activity such as the sale of illicit drugs, prostitution, or theft. As such law enforcement's first encounter with a child may be as a result of a criminal investigation where the child is named as a victim or suspect. Thus it is important to remember many children brought into the legal system must be checked to see if they are missing.

In the case of children who are missing from care they may run to their birth families prior to placement in care or some other familiar surroundings. Unfortunately as they run back to familiar surroundings, that may place them in harms way by being back in an environment they may have been removed from because of abuse or neglect. In addition there is a concern once a child runs away a pattern of running may develop and carry on throughout their placement history.

With regard to family abductions, cases have shown again and again that children who have been taken by a noncustodial family member may be in significant danger. Desperate people sometimes do desperate things, including bringing harm to their own children.

A review of NCMEC family-abduction cases from October 1, 1990, through September 30, 2005, reveals of the 21,189 cases reported 91.9 percent have been resolved. Of those resolved cases, however, 35 children were located deceased.⁹ A child abducted by a family member is likely to live a life "on the run" with that family member. Children may live with an altered name, appearance, and lifestyle; experience physical or medical neglect; experience unstable schooling; experience frequent moves or even homelessness; and/or are told lies about the left-behind parent.

The bottom line is all missing children – whether missing from a home, care, or any other setting or because they ran away, were abducted by a family or nonfamily member, or for any other reason – need to be immediately reported to law enforcement by caregivers and missing-children reports need to be immediately taken by law enforcement. Our children deserve nothing less, and in the case of taking immediate reports it is the law¹⁰ as discussed in the next section titled "Legal Issues and Laws In Place."

⁹John B. Rabun. *NCMEC Quarterly Progress Report: October 25, 2005*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, page 11 [hereafter *Quarterly Progress Report*].

¹⁰See explanation of the National Child Search Assistance Act on page 6 of this guide.

Legal Issues and Laws In Place

For many years specialized, multidisciplinary teams, including representatives from child-welfare agencies, social-service organizations, and law enforcement have formally collaborated to better protect children from abuse and neglect. Distinct protocols have been instituted to provide unified intervention in child-maltreatment cases.

For the children who have fled or have been taken from out-of-home care, however, significant gaps in services often exist. In instances where response and intervention protocols exist, they are often inconsistent from community-to-community. Child-welfare and law-enforcement personnel are often not entirely familiar with policies, procedures, and statutory obligations.

It is imperative for law-enforcement and child-welfare agencies to work together in developing joint response plans and carrying out actions pursuant to these policies in a collaborative manner. Many issues and relevant procedures need to be considered, discussed, and agreed upon. Open lines of communication, sharing of resources, and plans of action must be both understood and adhered to by management and staff from all involved agencies.

One point that cannot be over-emphasized is regardless of the reasons behind a disappearance, law-enforcement agencies are statutorily and ethically responsible for taking appropriate investigative action in all missing-child cases. Many federal statutes mandate legal requirements with respect to the handling of missing-child cases by law-enforcement agencies. They include the passage of the Federal Kidnapping Act in 1932; adoption of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act by all states in the United States of America from 1968 to 1983; passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act in 1974; creation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Missing Person File in 1975; passage of the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act in 1980; passage of the Missing Children Act in 1982; creation of the FBI's Unidentified Person File in 1983; passage of the Missing Children's Assistance Act and establishment of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in 1984; passage of the International Child Abduction Remedies Act, Amendment of Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to create the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth, and the United States becoming a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in 1988; passage of the National Child Search Assistance Act in 1990; enactment of the International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act in 1993; passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act including the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act and Child Safety Act in 1994; passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act known as "Jennifer's Law" in 2000; and passage of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act of 2003.¹¹ Key Acts governing currently mandated law-enforcement response are summarized next.

¹¹Steve Steidel, Editor. *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, May 2000, page 4 [hereafter *Missing and Abducted Children*].

The **National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990** (42 U.S.C. §§ 5779 and 5780) requires each federal, state, and local law-enforcement agency to immediately enter information about missing children younger than 18 into the National Crime Information Center database and the state law-enforcement system. The Act also establishes state reporting requirements, abolishes waiting periods before accepting a missing-child or unidentified-person report, and requires close liaison with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children regarding missing-child cases.

National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990

5779. Reporting Requirement

(a) In General. Each Federal, State, and local law enforcement agency shall report each case of a missing child under the age of 18 reported to such agency to the National Crime Information Center of the Department of Justice.

(b) Guidelines. The Attorney General may establish guidelines for the collection of such reports including procedures for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(c) Annual summary. The Attorney General shall publish an annual statistical summary of the reports received under this title [42 U.S.C.S. §§ 5779, 5780].

(Nov. 29, 1990, P. L. 101-647, Title XXXVII, § 3701, 104 Stat. 4966.)

HISTORY; ANCILLARY LAWS AND DIRECTIVES

References in text:

This “Act”, referred to in this section, is Act Nov. 29, 1990, P. L. 101-647, Title XXXVII, 104 Stat. 4966, which is popularly known as the Crime Control Act of 1990, and generally amends title 18 U.S.C.S. For full classification of such Act, consult U.S.C.S. Tables volumes.

Explanatory notes:

This section was enacted as part of Act Nov. 29, 1990, P. L. 101-647, Title XXXVII, and not as part of Act Sept. 7, 1974, P. L. 93-415, Title IV, which generally comprises this chapter.

§ 5780. State requirements

Each State reporting under the provisions of this title shall [42 U.S.C.S. §§ 5779 et seq.] –

(1) ensure that no law enforcement agency within the State establishes or maintains any policy that requires the observance of any waiting period before accepting a missing child or unidentified person report;

(2) provide that each such report and all necessary and available information, which, with respect to each missing child report, shall include –

(A) the name, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, and eye and hair color of the child;

(B) the date and location of the last known contact with the child; and

(C) the category under which the child is reported missing;

is entered immediately into the State law enforcement system and the National Crime Information Center computer networks and made available to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse within the State or other agency designated within the State to receive such reports; and

(3) provide that after receiving reports as provided in paragraph (2), the law enforcement agency that entered the report into the National Crime Information Center shall –

(A) no later than 60 days after the original entry of the record into the State law enforcement system and National Crime Information Center computer networks, verify and update such record with any additional information, including where available medical and dental records;

(B) institute or assist with appropriate search and investigative procedures; and

(C) maintain close liaison with the National Center for Missing [&] Exploited Children for the exchange of information and technical assistance in the missing children cases.

(Nov. 29, 1990, P. L. 101-647, Title XXXVII, § 3702, 104 Stat. 4967.)

HISTORY; ANCILLARY LAWS AND DIRECTIVES

Explanatory notes:

This section was enacted as part of Act Nov. 29, 1990, P. L. 101-647, Title XXXVII, and not as part of Act Sept. 7, 1974, P. L. 93-415, Title IV, which generally comprises this chapter.

A provision of the **PROTECT Act of 2003**, specifically Suzanne's Law, amended the National Child Search Assistance Act to require each federal, state, and local law-enforcement agency to enter information about missing persons younger than 21 into NCIC.

And **state statutes** regarding the handling of missing-child cases may also apply. In addition to requiring immediate entry of missing-child information into state law-enforcement systems, they may require entry of dental records and other detailed identifying information.

Furthermore, over time, it has been observed some law-enforcement agencies require a missing-child report be filed in the jurisdiction where the child resided prior to the disappearance while others require the report be filed in the jurisdiction where the child was last seen. This conflict has frequently resulted in loss of valuable time during the period immediately after a disappearance and frustration for those attempting to report a disappearance.

The safest and most effective policy is to require acceptance of a report wherever reported. This may be in the jurisdiction where the child was last seen or it may be in the jurisdiction where the child legally resides, if different. In cases involving a child who is missing from out-of-home care, the report will ordinarily be filed in the jurisdiction where the out-of-home placement is located. There will always be exceptions, but they will be based on unique circumstances. These guidelines represent reasonable practices to promote continuity among law-enforcement agency efforts.

Having said this, it is important for law-enforcement officers in both the jurisdiction where a child was last seen and the jurisdiction where the child last resided to collaborate during the subsequent investigation. Also nothing precludes transfer of primary responsibility for an investigation, if warranted by information revealed during the investigation.

Law enforcement and child welfare share mutual responsibility and liability when a child is reported as “missing from care.” Inadequacies in the discovery, reporting, intervention, investigation, or recovery processes by either a law-enforcement or child-welfare agency may go unnoticed unless the child becomes the victim of foul play. In order to minimize the possibility of a child being seriously injured, assaulted, or killed while missing, all cases must be **immediately** reported, entered into NCIC and the state law-enforcement system, and investigated. Otherwise what would normally be an innocuous mistake or policy flaw may immediately become the center of intense scrutiny, especially by the media. Additionally agencies need to be aware of potential exposure to civil liability, especially in cases when the community perceives actions on the part of any agency or individual involved with the case even inadvertently contributed to the endangerment of a child. Potential court judgments may damage professional and agency reputations and be financially significant.

There are many legal precedents highlighting the duty of law enforcement to provide appropriate and adequate services. The failure of an agency to identify training needs and set policy for matters that are foreseeable may create liability. Failure to appropriately handle a case pursuant to relevant statutes or generally accepted practices may create liability. Failure to act reasonably and/or in a timely manner may create liability. The cases noted below point to the importance of ensuring policies, procedures, and actions are defensible.

A municipality may, in certain circumstances, be held liable for constitutional violations resulting from its failure to train its employees. The inadequacy of law-enforcement training may serve as a basis for liability when the failure to train in a relevant respect amounts to deliberate indifference to the constitutional rights of persons with whom law enforcement came into contact.¹²

Although the general rule is that the state is not liable for its omissions, there are several exceptions to the rule, including the “danger-creation” exception. This exception exists where there is affirmative conduct on the part of the state that places an individual in danger. In examining whether an officer affirmatively places an individual in danger, the court does not look solely to the agency or individual, nor does the court’s opinion rest on what options may not have been available to the individual. Instead the court examines whether the officers left the person in a situation that was more dangerous than the one in which they found him or her.¹³

Law-enforcement and child-welfare agencies must collectively develop and implement joint protocols and train staff in the response, investigation, and resolution of children-missing-from-care cases. Both agencies must establish protocols to identify tasks and responsibilities for the intake and follow-up of children in their care and for those who disappear.

¹²*City of Canton v. Harris*, 489 U.S. 378 (1989).

¹³*Munger v. City of Glasgow*, 227 F.3d 1082 (9th Cir. 2000).

Self-Assessment of Law-Enforcement Agencies

Law-enforcement agencies should conduct a self-assessment analysis and determine if adequate policies and procedures are in place. If none exist, it is imperative they be developed, implemented, and understood by all staff members.

Examples of considerations to be examined during self-assessment are noted below. The first set of questions addresses missing-child cases in general. The second set focuses on cases involving children missing from care.

- [] Is an officer dispatched on **all** missing-child reports?
- [] Are all staff members in your agency, including officers, investigators, supervisors, and civilians, aware of the National Child Search Assistance Act mandating immediate entry of **all** missing-child cases into NCIC/the state law-enforcement system and coordination with NCMEC?
- [] Does your agency's policy for handling missing-children cases follow model policies recommended by NCMEC?¹⁴
- [] Are all missing-child reports sent to one central location?
- [] Is each report entered in a central log for easy case management?
- [] Is each report checked for proper teletype entry and/or removal?
- [] Is each report checked for valid/accurate information?
- [] Is the person reporting the case promptly contacted for initial case follow-up?
- [] Is the person reporting the case regularly contacted to update him or her about the case?
- [] Are photographs of missing children obtained in all cases?
- [] Is a bulletin with a photograph prepared and distributed within 2 hours of receiving the report about the missing child?
- [] Is it clear as to who investigates missing-child cases?
- [] Are you familiar with NCMEC and the services they offer?¹⁵
- [] Are you familiar with your state missing children's clearinghouse and the services they offer?¹⁶
- [] Does your state have laws requiring certain actions be taken in missing-child cases?
- [] Are your local, state, and federal records checked to determine if the missing child/suspected abductor have pending criminal charges or are being investigated by a separate section within your agency?
- [] Are the dental records of all children missing for more than 30 days entered into NCIC?
- [] Do you have an officer/unit specializing in missing-child cases?

¹⁴Model policies are available online at www.missingkids.com by clicking on the "Training" and "Model Policies" links.

¹⁵Detailed information about NCMEC is found beginning on page 27 of this guide and may also be obtained by visiting www.missingkids.com.

¹⁶See section titled "State Clearinghouses" on page 29 of this guide.

- [] When a missing child returns/is recovered, are all cases cleared by use of a supplemental report?
- [] Is the recovery/return of each missing-child confirmed by sight?
- [] Does your agency have a waiting period before taking a runaway report?
- [] Are you able to readily identify your jurisdiction's habitual runaways?
- [] Is there a runaway shelter in your community?
- [] If so, what procedures are in place to work with this runaway shelter?
- [] Once located, are runaways sensitively interviewed to determine their reasons for leaving, gather valuable information, and refer them for follow-up treatment and assistance?
- [] Is each recovered/returned missing child immediately removed from NCIC?
- [] Are all unidentified body teletypes from other agencies compared to your active cases for possible matches?
- [] Do you reply to inquiring agencies in regard to the teletypes they have sent, even if there is no match?
- [] Are you aware of alternative resources within your community to aid in locating missing children?
- [] If so, are services being used?
- [] Is there a policy regarding the publishing of missing-child bulletins by the local media on a regular basis?
- [] Is there an officer in your agency who is knowledgeable about the laws pertaining to family abduction, Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrants, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, and the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS)?
- [] Does your agency have an active public-relations response to missing-children cases?
- [] Are you able to provide accurate statistics about the number of missing children reported to your agency annually and break down the total by ages and categories?
- [] Has your agency established linkages with child-welfare agencies to assist in the reunification of missing children with their families?
- [] Do you use the resources of your intelligence and/or crime analysis unit(s), if operational in your agency, to generate leads and locate victims and potential offenders?¹⁷

¹⁷*Missing and Abducted Children*, op. cit., n. 11, pages 168-169.

With respect to missing-from-care cases, the considerations listed below should be addressed.

- [] Has your law-enforcement agency discussed with your local child-welfare agency the importance of collecting specific biographical information in order to have the critical information needed to complete a missing-person report at the point of intake? As a matter of policy, does the child-welfare agency have a recent photograph available of the children in their care? Are procedures in place to help ensure this information is available to investigating officers in a timely manner? It may be appropriate to provide blank copies of your agency's *Missing Person Report* to child-welfare representatives to help ensure complete information is made available to investigating officers.
- [] Do law-enforcement officers have a way to access child-welfare files and an on-call caseworker 24 hours a day 7 days a week?
- [] Do recovery procedures include action by a multidisciplinary team to respond to situations such as the trauma abducted children suffer from or determine the underlying reasons for running away?
- [] Is there an understanding regarding and a plan for responding to media inquiries?
- [] Do policies clearly state the procedure to be followed when a child missing from care is found whether in your jurisdiction or another one?
- [] Do procedures cover action to take if a child, upon recovery, reports inappropriate actions/activities at the facility or home they were placed in prior to the missing episode?
- [] Do procedures provide direction for handling a child missing from another jurisdiction or state, when he or she is located in your jurisdiction?

Does your law-enforcement agency have sound policies in place to most effectively and efficiently respond to missing-child cases in general and missing-from-care cases?

Adopting or Enhancing A Team Approach

Roles and Responsibilities

Child welfare and law enforcement have a shared interest in the safe return of children missing from out-of-home care. When child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies work in partnership, they provide the expertise of both disciplines and enhance both the investigative effort and successful recovery of the child. It is essential both partners also bring a respect for the other's point of view and knowledge, openness to different ways of working and thinking, and a willingness to work together in the best interests of the child who is missing.¹⁸

Child welfare brings to the partnership a set of values, knowledge, and skills focusing on the safety and well-being of children who are in out-of-home care and devote much of their work to the relationships between children and birth families, children and foster families or other caregivers, and birth families and caregivers. They are trained in a strengths-based, family-focused perspective and approach and conduct assessments and make professional judgments based on their knowledge of a variety of topics including family dynamics and child development.¹⁹

Law-enforcement personnel focus their work on the investigation necessary to locate and safely return the child to the custody of the agency. Their efforts are dedicated to fact-finding, the collection of evidence, and upholding the law. Their knowledge of family dynamics tend to focus more on the specific circumstances, problems, and individual characteristics that may lead to abduction or runaway episodes.²⁰

Regardless of differences in approach between professions, given the fact law-enforcement and child-welfare agencies are frequent partners in responding to and managing the recovery of children missing from care, it is imperative for agency managers to establish an environment promoting genuine collaboration and cooperation between respective staff members.

¹⁸CWLA *Best Practice Guidelines*, op. cit., n. 3, page 33.

¹⁹*Id.*

²⁰*Id.*

In working with the assigned child-welfare worker, any previously appointed counsel such as a guardian ad litem,²¹ and in cases when a child is a crime victim any appointed victim advocate, law enforcement is better able to obtain all available information in furtherance of the investigation and children may be placed in an environment conducive to growth and well-being upon their recovery.

Duties and Development of Those Duties

Cooperation between agencies will always be enhanced through adoption of mutually agreed upon protocols that clarify reporting arrangements; response procedures; and the shared and distinct roles and responsibilities of child welfare, law enforcement, and others involved with cases of children missing from care.

Agency-specific and collaborative practices should be detailed in a written policy and procedures document. A clear delineation of the distinct and shared responsibilities of law enforcement and child welfare reduces confusion, shortens response time, and increases efficient use of personnel and other resources. Examples of issues, procedures, and resource material contained in a joint protocol document may include

- A list containing the names and telephone numbers of key contact individuals from law enforcement, child welfare, and other involved agencies.
- Agreement on the case-management system that will best serve the needs of both agencies.
- A comprehensive resource list including resources available from other entities.
- Requirements to have joint briefings and meetings when case circumstances warrant such.

²¹The practice of appointing counsel to children in care is gaining national support as evidenced by the four examples noted below.

- According to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), in order to receive federal funding, in the form of grants to states for child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment programs, states must appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the child in any abuse and neglect case that results in a judicial proceeding. In these instances the guardian ad litem may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate 42 U.S.C. § 5106a(b)(2)(A)(xiii) (2003).
- A February 7, 2005, Order by Judge Marvin H. Schoob of the United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia in *Kenny A. v. Perdue* opined all children in Georgia state care have the constitutional right to counsel in all major child-welfare proceedings. The proceedings include the initial hearing, adjudicatory hearing, dispositional hearing, and periodic case reviews.
- A 1998 survey by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges showed 40 states appoint counsel for children in abuse and neglect cases. Of those 40 states 30 appoint an attorney guardian ad litem. The remaining 10 states appoint a guardian ad litem who serves in addition to an appointed attorney. Information from "Child Abuse and Neglect Cases: Representation as a Critical Component of Effective Practice" in *Technical Assistance Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 2, March 1998, page 44. This bulletin is published by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
- And, as recommended in *Adoption 2002: The President's Initiative on Adoption and Foster Care Guidelines for Public Policy and State Legislation Governing Permanence for Children*, in order for the best interest of children to be known, it is recommended states assure all children involved in dependency cases be represented by a trained attorney at every stage of the court process. Information accessed on March 21, 2005, at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/adopt02/02final.htm>, chapter 7, section 11.

- Use of an oversight committee board to address problems and deviations from policy and procedure and recommend corrective action.
- Design of a standardized interview format to be used by officers and child-welfare staff members.
- Commonly used forms such as initial intake, missing-child report, and lead-intake.
- Joint training programs such as policies and procedures, scenario-based training exercises, investigative processes, available technologies, interviewing techniques, and report preparation.
- Ensuring child-welfare agency intakes report and law-enforcement report information collection is consistent, especially with regard to collection of basic biographical details.
- Ensuring updated information resulting from respective agency efforts is shared with other agencies in a timely manner.
- Establishing a multidisciplinary team or work group to actively improve relationships and processes addressing children's issues of mutual concern. Members of the group should be regular attendees who have the ability to make things happen at an administrative level.
- Making sure each agency has an opportunity to express needs and concerns.
- Developing a process and the forms needed for interviewing each child who has returned from a missing episode.
- Provisions to collaborate with prosecutors and the courts, when warranted by case specifics, such as in cases when the child is enticed to voluntarily flee with an adult and adult offenders will be prosecuted.
- A public information plan for publicizing all cases and preparing for inevitable media coverage in high-profile cases.
- Use of immediate community-notification systems when case circumstances warrant.

Once this protocol is completed it must be shared with and understood by all staff members directly or indirectly impacted by it.

A well-written **memorandum of understanding** (MOU) may help ensure smooth implementation of joint protocols and improve practice by providing written guidelines for duties, roles, and responsibilities of member agencies in investigations and other multidisciplinary functions, serving as a reference when questions arise about practice, establishing consistency, and reducing the need for on-the-spot decision making by defining protocols in advance. The result is faster response, greater efficiency, more effective prevention, and reduced trauma for families and caregivers.

An MOU between child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies on the subject of children missing from care should, at a minimum, include

- Statement of purpose
- Discussion of joint/respective missions and organizational responsibilities

- Roles and responsibilities of different professionals such as appointing a victim advocate or guardian ad litem to represent the needs of the child who is missing and subsequent to post recovery
- Definitions and types of missing episodes covered
- Procedures for handling each type of missing episode including investigative techniques
- Procedures for joint response to reports of missing children
- Establishment of points of contact between agencies and birth families, foster parents or other caregivers, media, and other community service providers
- Information to be shared and procedures for sharing information about the child/family and about the investigation
- Procedures for return of children once located
- Procedures for safeguarding or removing other children in the shelter if victimization is suspected
- Procedures for follow-up investigations about reports of victimization or other criminal acts occurring at the shelter/foster home
- Procedures for debriefing children and families
- Provisions for joint or cross-training
- Criteria/procedures for working with other agencies
- Provisions for multidisciplinary consultation, which will establish the framework for the future addition of other parties to the protocol
- Concrete tips for handling special issues such as when cases not covered by the protocol arise
- Methods of oversight, evaluation, and renewal of agreement
- Relevant appendices such as selected portions of statutes, regulations, and forms

Several items may present challenges when law enforcement and child welfare are formulating joint protocols and accompanying MOUs. If not addressed at that stage, they will complicate the search for the missing children. Those challenges include shared definitions, confidentiality issues, sharing information with the public, and emancipation.

The need for clear, consistent **definitions of “missing”** in both statute and policy is essential for effective communication and coordination of efforts to locate children who are missing. Standardized definitions facilitate a more expeditious and appropriate response by all parties when terminology and level of risk is clearly understood by all. Agency partners should establish mutually acceptable categories of absences within the framework of state statutes, each with its own level of risk and expected response as part of the framework of joint practice.²²

Law-enforcement agencies employ a number of mechanisms for capturing, storing, and **sharing information about missing children**. They include the

²²CWLA *Best Practice Guidelines*, op. cit., n. 3, pages 33-34.

NCIC and state law-enforcement system, NCMEC and state missing children clearinghouses, the Federal Parent Locator Service, and agency-proprietary databases. Child-welfare agencies also capture, store, and share information about children in out-of-home care, primarily for use in providing required services and coordinating efforts.

It is imperative for child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies to develop mechanisms and databases to collect and use common data elements that may be easily accessed when a child is reported missing.

The creation and maintenance of integrated local information systems is essential in order to meet the needs of child welfare and law enforcement and facilitate cross-system information sharing and a coordinated response. While issues may surface with regard to costs and confidentiality of records, efforts to develop a structured information system should be pursued.

In regard to **confidentiality**, law-enforcement agencies seek to gather as much information as possible in order to conduct investigations. Child-welfare agencies may operate under statutes and guidelines including specific regulations concerning the types of information that may be disclosed about children and families and to whom.

It is recognized this may create significant challenges during a missing-child investigation. Protocols should clarify and streamline confidentiality requirements so pertinent information may be shared among professionals, agencies, and jurisdictions involved in the investigation of a missing-child case. Such protocols should also delineate what information may and may not be shared with caregivers and members of the birth family and the procedures to be followed in doing so.

When collaborating to develop operational procedures, it is strongly recommended law-enforcement and child-welfare agencies consult with legal counsel. It is imperative issues are addressed in advance to help ensure investigation-related information, including photographs, may legally be released by the child-welfare agency in a prompt manner.

Protocols should also be in place to govern what **information** may be **released to the public** to assist in the search for a child missing from care. For instance release of a poster with a photograph and key biographical information should not include the fact the child is missing from care simply the last location where the child was seen.

Child-welfare agencies, in most cases, do not have care and custody of children once they have reached **emancipation**. Following a child's emancipation most child-welfare agencies close their case on missing "emancipated" children; however, they may or may not notify the investigating law-enforcement agency. It is important for child-welfare agencies to notify law enforcement when the case is closed due to the child's emancipation and identify whether or not the child has been located.

Without specific and correct lines of communication and policies, the law-enforcement agency may remove information about the child from the NCIC

missing-person database eliminating the possibility for identification of the child if found at a later time. The law-enforcement agency of jurisdiction should keep the case active and information about the child entered into NCIC, until the location and safety of the child, now an adult, is determined.

Once protocols and MOUs are in place, **cross-system training** should be employed. Child-welfare and law-enforcement agencies may benefit from joint training efforts that share specific information about agency and collaborative protocols for handling cases of children missing from care as well as the values and beliefs shaping each agency's policy and practice.

By having an opportunity to interact with employees of other professions during training, child-welfare and law-enforcement personnel gain a better understanding of the specific problems and issues faced by their counterparts.

NCIC: The Need for Good Information and Correct Entry

The importance of collecting and recording detailed information cannot be emphasized enough. That along with updating and on-going sharing of information is imperative during these investigations. Information forms the foundation for the ensuing missing-child investigation. Detailed and properly recorded information is not only important to help ensure the local investigation is thorough, but needed to broaden the scope of the investigation to regional and national levels.

This most effective mechanism to widely disseminate information to law enforcement is use of NCIC and the state law-enforcement system. By entering detailed information into these databases, virtually all law-enforcement agencies in the nation have access to it. As already mentioned, use of NCIC and the state law-enforcement system is not only an appropriate step, it is legally required.

It is also important to point out this information is needed by NCMEC and state clearinghouses when assisting investigating law-enforcement agencies. With respect to publicizing cases, it is used for everything from preparing and distributing traditional printed missing-child posters to placing information on missing-child web sites to broadly disseminating information via nationwide alert systems. Immediate dissemination of accurate and detailed information to the public does result in recoveries. Of the children featured in NCMEC's Picture Them Home® campaign 1 in 6.6 is recovered.²³ Perhaps the best way to emphasize the importance of collecting and then entering detailed information about a missing child into NCIC and the state law-enforcement system is through the examples below.

When information about a runaway child is properly entered by a law-enforcement agency in Maine, the child could be located after interacting with an officer in Florida. The officer in Florida, thinking the child is acting in a suspi-

²³*Quarterly Progress Report*, op. cit., n. 9, page 16. NCMEC's Picture Them Home campaign maximizes the dissemination of missing-child photographs through a partnership with more than 2,400 private-sector participants who, from October 1985 through September 2005, have printed 388,440 photographs/biographies of 15,614 individual missing children.

cious manner, can run a simple NCIC file check and come up with a “hit.” This, of course, assumes the child gives his or her actual name and date of birth to the officer, but the point is the potential for locating the child only exists if the information is accurately recorded and promptly entered by the investigating agency.

After a court proceeding was not decided in his favor, a noncustodial father abducted his daughter from foster care in Texas using his own car. If the investigating law-enforcement agency enters information about the child in NCIC’s Missing Person File and enters the vehicle and/or abducting-parent information in NCIC’s Wanted Person File, an apprehension can occur if the vehicle is merely “file checked” by an officer in Virginia. The vehicle may not even be stopped for a law violation, perhaps information is run on the vehicle simply because of suspicious activity by the driver. The result is notification from NCIC that the vehicle is associated with the child’s disappearance. But this will only occur if information about the child and vehicle are properly entered and **all entries are properly cross-referenced.**

And in the worst-case scenario, a deceased child missing from Illinois can be identified in California through physical characteristics, even if no other identification is present, but only if detailed identifying physical characteristics, such as scars, marks, and tattoos, are included with the missing-person information entered into NCIC and the state law-enforcement system by the investigating law-enforcement agency.

For additional information about NCIC and its on- and off-line capabilities, please view, download, and/or order *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management* from the “More Publications” section of www.missingkids.com or order a hard copy by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

To facilitate the entry of information about the missing child through **standardized-intake and missing-person report** forms for entry into NCIC and other key databases, use of a comprehensive intake form is critical. Law-enforcement and child-welfare personnel should create and implement a standardized intake form in which the information listed below is documented.

- Child’s full name and any nicknames or aliases
- Child’s gender and race
- Child’s height and weight
- Child’s hair and eye color
- Child’s previous addresses
- Child’s age and date of birth
- Child’s place of birth
- Child’s physical characteristics including detailed descriptions of scars, marks, tattoos and their locations
- Child’s Social Security Number
- Child’s E-mail addresses and cellular telephone number if applicable
- Names and contact information for both birth parents and/or guardians including the birth mother’s maiden name

- Names and contact information for siblings, other relatives, romantic interests, and friends
- Name and location of the school attending or last school attended including grade
- Medical information including medical conditions, medications used, doctors visited, anomalies, deformities, and previous fractures
- Description of interests, hobbies, places frequented, and places of interest
- Name and location of employment if applicable
- Other relevant information such as details and documents regarding custody
- Names of and contact information for all involved child-welfare representatives
- Prior placements and residences including those residences prior to state custody²⁴

The immediate availability of a recent photograph of the child is also extremely important when a law-enforcement agency is asked to take action in a missing-child case. Therefore it is suggested law-enforcement agencies make every effort to help ensure out-of-home care providers, through a mutually agreed upon policy, have photographs on file.

It is also recommended, if legally permissible, fingerprints and DNA samples be obtained for identification purposes in case a child is found and unable to verbally assist in an identification.

Recovery, Reunification, and Addressing Any Victimization During the Missing Episode

The partnership between child welfare and law enforcement does not end when a child is located. Depending on the laws in a jurisdiction, law enforcement may not be able to detain or take a missing child into custody once found. Thus it is imperative to have a plan in place governing the specific steps law enforcement and child welfare may take to safeguard the child and expedite his or her transfer to a secure placement.

Resolution may involve changing exiting protocols, processes, systems, and laws. For example one of the limitations of NCIC is while law enforcement may hold stolen property entered into NCIC when found, they do not have the same right to hold a child entered as a missing person once found. Working together, child welfare and law enforcement need to find solutions to such limitations that will better safeguard children by ensuring immediate recovery once located.

Once the child is recovered it is critical an interview be conducted, ideally by both child welfare and law enforcement. In general the interviewers must identify needs for a physical and psychological examination and any needs for a new placement rather than return to the one prior to the missing episode. With regard to abduction by a family member, an interview may reveal important information to be used in prosecuting the abductor(s). It may also assist in determining

²⁴CWLA *Best Practice Guidelines*, op. cit., n. 3, pages 58-59.

details regarding what happened to the child during the episodes and help in developing a strategy to avoid future incidents.

The same holds true for children who run away. Interviewing a runaway who has been located may reveal the underlying reasons for the episode. Without this information, it is difficult to take action to reduce the likelihood of a future episode. It may also assist in determining details regarding what happened to the child during the episode. This may assist in taking any needed legal action against individuals who took advantage of the child while absent from care.

Improving Prevention

Perhaps the most effective place to dedicate prevention efforts is with the improvement in the quality of out-of-home-care services. Developing, implementing, and assuring compliance with an array of organizational, managerial, supervisory, and front-line practices may lessen the risk of a child running away or being abducted. Quality assurances include, but are not limited to, the capacity and ability to

- Provide adequate preparation for placement
- Offer sufficient placements allowing for ample and mutually acceptable selection
- Conduct quality risk assessment
- Triage problems as they arise and promote placement stability
- Provide regular opportunities for visitation with family members and visit frequently as indicated by assessment
- Visit and photograph the children regularly
- Develop and provide formal guidance to foster parents and workers about strategies to prevent unauthorized absences from placement
- Provide personal safety training for all children in out-of-home care
- Inform children about risks of and alternatives to running away
- Address the need for and availability and provision of services for children in care
- Conduct a periodic census by the agency of children in placement²⁵

Additionally, adequate preparation of children, their birth parents, and foster parents may provide a foundation for placement to ease the transition and reduce the number of unanticipated problems. When these problems are not avoided it may lead to high stress, poor coping, and placement disruption. The child, birth family, and foster family should all be given thorough information about the placement plans and have an opportunity to fully discuss the placement with staff members.²⁶

Law enforcement needs to partner with child-welfare agencies in this prevention effort, especially in regard to stopping repeated runaway incidents. For example law enforcement has the opportunity to play a significant role in preventing subsequent occurrences during encounters with recovered runaways. This is dependent on what actions are taken during the recovery. Does the law-enforcement officer conduct/participate in a forensic interview to determine why the child was missing from placement? Is pertinent information turned over to the child-welfare agency?

²⁵Caren Kaplan. *Children Missing from Care: An Issue Brief*. Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 2004, pages 31-32.

²⁶*Id.*, page 32.

The importance of structured risk assessment also plays a major role in prevention. Whenever evidence of risk surfaces, it is imperative for child-welfare authorities to flag records associated with children deemed to be potential runaways or at-risk of a family abduction. Flagging of records provides a clear indication to all persons associated with the case of the situation and better allows them to take appropriate precautions. This includes bringing concerns and details to the attention of law enforcement whenever risk is deemed to be significant.

If there are multiple missing episodes at a particular out-of-home-care setting, there may be problems with the placement that are the impetus for children running or seeking alternate living arrangements. For example are the children running away from exploitation, neglect, substandard living conditions, or even assaults by other children?

Another measure of prevention law-enforcement agencies may provide is through School Resource Officers. Many law-enforcement agencies have officers who perform roles within the schools. These officers may interact with children who are in out-of-home care. These officers may have positive impacts on these children, which could play a role in averting a voluntary or involuntary missing episode.

Often these officers are in a position to develop personal relationships, offering children a direct resource to help them cope with their changing placements, perceptions, and other troubling issues. School Resource Officers also know friends and associates of children in care. These people may be able to render valuable information in locating a child in care who becomes missing.

Resources²⁷

Child Welfare League of America

440 First Street, Northwest, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2085
202-638-2952
www.cwla.org

The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based, child-welfare organization. They are committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children and their families, and protecting every child from harm. They offer research data, conferences and training, consultation, publications, and advocacy.

National Center for Missing Adults

2432 West Peoria Avenue, Suite 1286
Phoenix, Arizona 85029-4739
602-749-2000
1-800-690-FIND
www.theyaremissd.org

The National Center for Missing Adults is dedicated to the prevention of abduction and safe recovery of missing persons with primary focus on adults determined by law enforcement to be endangered due to foul play, diminished mental capacity, physical disability, or suspicious circumstances.

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®

Charles B. Wang International Children's Building
699 Prince Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3175
1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)
www.missingkids.com

NCMEC is law enforcement's direct link to many investigative services and resources including case management, case enhancement, information analysis, imagery and identification services, age progression and regression, photo distribution, and web-site postings. In addition NCMEC offers key assistance to programs needed during the investigation of a missing-child case. They include the AMBER Alert, LOCATER™, Project ALERT, and Team Adam.

²⁷The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children endorses the practices noted in this report and provides information about the services offered by certain organizations as a public service without sponsorship or endorsement of them.

NCMEC assists cities, towns, states, and regions across the United States in the implementation of **America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response**, a voluntary partnership between law-enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate **AMBER Alerts**, an urgent bulletin "over the airwaves" in the most serious child-abduction cases, and promotes use of these alerts in conjunction with entry of information about those missing children in the FBI's NCIC computer.

NCMEC's **Lost Child Alert Technology Resource** provides law enforcement the tools and technology needed to rapidly disseminate missing-child images and information through an advanced, web-based computer program available, free-of-charge, to law enforcement. **LOCATER** helps law enforcement immediately create and disseminate professional-looking posters locally, statewide, or across the nation.

Project ALERT, America's Law Enforcement Retiree Team, was launched by NCMEC in 1992 and has the endorsement of 18 leading, national, law-enforcement associations. The team is comprised of more than 150 active Representatives who have retired after serving an average of more than 20 years each from a federal, state, or local law-enforcement career. Their experience and skills are made available as on-site Representatives to **requesting agencies** in need of immediate assistance, long-term case review, surveillance, follow-up of leads from state-to-state, assistance with witness interviews, a family liaison, a public speaker, and a roll-call trainer.

Team Adam, launched in 2003, is patterned after the National Transportation Safety Board's system for sending specialists to the site of serious transportation incidents. Team Adam sends experienced, investigative specialists to the site of serious child abductions and cases of child sexual exploitation. Cases "intaked" by NCMEC are monitored by the Team Adam Project Manager, and Team Adam Consultants are deployed as case circumstances dictate. The emphasis is on nonfamily abductions and cases involving lost, injured, or otherwise missing children.

Team Adam is staffed by more than 50 talented, retired federal, state, and local investigators chosen through a formal selection process involving an evaluation by a committee with representatives from the FBI, state law enforcement, and local law-enforcement executives experienced in the investigation of crimes committed against children.

Team Adam assistance to law enforcement includes search, analysis, technical support, investigation, and equipment/resources. Team Adam assistance offered to family members includes family advocacy services, personal assistance, child-safety education, stress management, and media relations.

National Runaway Switchboard

3080 North Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60657-4208
1-800-621-4000
www.nrscrisisline.org

The National Runaway Switchboard operates a hotline for teens to call when on the run. They facilitate relationships to help ensure youth and families have access to resources in their communities; which includes child advocacy, runaway prevention training, teenage bulletin board, education and solution-focused intervention, nonsectarian and nonjudgmental support.

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse**

PO Box 6000
Rockville, Maryland 20849-6000
1-800-851-3420
www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. OJJDP supports states and communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective and coordinated prevention and intervention programs and improve the juvenile-justice system so it protects public safety, holds offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of juveniles and their families.

State Clearinghouses

Each state has a Missing Children Clearinghouse designed to collect, store, and disseminate information to assist in the location of missing children. They provide liaison among individuals, private organizations, and law-enforcement officials regarding missing-children information. Some clearinghouses provide analytical and investigative support to the officers assigned to these cases. Contact information for each state clearinghouse may be obtained online by visiting www.missingkids.com and clicking on the links to “More Services” and “NCMEC Clearinghouse Program” or calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).



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CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE SELECTED STATE PROFILES¹

California

Resource

Los Angeles County Children Missing in Foster Care Task Force
Information, including monthly progress memos to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, can be obtained from:

Anita Shannon, Executive Assistant for the Director's Office

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Families Services

c/o 425 Shatto place

Los Angeles, CA 90020

Fax: 213.639.1681

Phone: (213) 351-5527

Email: Shanna@dcfs.co.la.ca.us

- ***What resources are there for jurisdictions interested in developing a local initiative to address the issue of children who run from care?***

Jurisdictions can look at the example set by the Los Angeles County Children Missing in Foster Care Task Force. In 2004, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Children and Family Services to work collaboratively with public and private agencies to develop preventive strategies, to reduce the number of missing foster youth and to enhance current policies and procedures to locate missing foster youth. From this instruction the Los Angeles County Children Missing in Foster Care Task Force was created.

On March 30, 2006, the Task Force was reconvened. The Task Force presently consists of representation from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Sheriff's Department, the Department of Health Services, Mental Health, Juvenile Court, Probation Department, Public Social Services, city and county law enforcement agencies, local school districts, emancipated and pre-emancipating youth, and other organizations as needed. The Task Force is currently focused on the following areas related to identifying and refining practices for the prevention and recovery of youth who run away from foster care:

- 1) Existing county-wide and community specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- 2) Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- 3) Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- 4) Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), a pilot program that pairs trained Permanency Partners with youth to identify one or more permanent connections, with the goal of either family reunification or moving the child out of long-term foster care and into adoption or legal guardianship, and;
- 5) Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

¹ These resources are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive, of the many resources that are available from the states on the issue of children missing from care.

Resource

The Los Angeles County Procedural Guide- 0100-570.11 Runaways, from the Los Angeles County Child Welfare Services Handbook, can be found at:

<http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/policy/hndbook%20cws/0100/010057011Runaway.doc>

- ***What resources are there for social workers² when children run from care?***

The Los Angeles County Procedural Guide's chapter entitled *Runaways* outlines the steps a social worker must take when she/he learns that a child is missing or has run away from a placement. These instructions inform the social worker what reports must be filed, and the time frame within which these tasks must be completed. They direct the social worker as to the communication that needs to occur with the child's caretaker, law enforcement, and other key parties. In the event that law enforcement refuses to accept a Missing Person's Report, the Guide provides specific directions on the steps to be followed.

The Procedural Guide also outlines the responsibilities of the Dependency Investigator when she/he learns that a child is missing or has run away from a placement. These instructions inform the Investigator what reports must be filed and the time frame within which these tasks must be completed.

The Procedural Guide briefly outlines the responsibilities of the Office of Abducted and Runaway Kids (ARKS) Liaison, instructing the liaison on the data and information that must be entered and reviewed within the ARKS and the Juvenile Automated Data Entry (JADE) systems and how often the social worker needs to be contacted.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers or social workers when children are recovered?***

The Los Angeles County Procedural Guide's chapter entitled *Runaways* outlines the steps a Dependency Investigator must take once a runaway child is found or returns. The information also details who must be contacted, the timeframe within which they must be contacted, and the forms that must be completed. The investigator is instructed to interview the child regarding the runaway episode, asking questions to elicit specific information that must be obtained.

² The term 'social worker' refers to the child welfare and provider staff who work directly with children in foster care who go missing.

Connecticut

Resource

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families Policy Manual, Section 36-93 Reporting a Missing Child can be found at:

<http://www.dir.ct.gov/dcf/Policy/Trmt36/36-93.htm>

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

The policies and procedures of Section 36-93 require the child's social worker to notify the local law enforcement agency, file a missing child report, and contact the child's parent or guardian. The social worker must also complete "Critical Incident Summary Form" (DCF-823) and submit the DCF-823 to the Director of Children's Protective and Family Services. The missing child report must include the name of the reporter, relationship of the reporter to the missing child, name, age, address, and all identifying characteristics of the missing child, length of time the child has been missing, and all other information deemed relevant by either the reporter or the law enforcement agency.

Florida

Resource

The Family Safety Operating Procedure NO. 175-85, Prevention, Reporting, and Services to Missing Children can be found at:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/publications/policies/175-85.pdf>

The state of Florida provides social workers and foster parents with guidance and support through Family Safety Operating Procedure NO. 175-85, Prevention, Reporting, and Services to Missing Children. The operating procedure provides definitions and general requirements related to prevention, requirements for the caregiver's initial response to the runaway episode, and requirements for the social worker's response to the runaway episode. The operating procedure also outlines the services the social worker is required to provide while a child is missing from care and the responses the worker is required to complete when the child returns to care.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers when children run from care?***

The operating procedure instructs caregivers that if exigent circumstances exist, they must immediately call Law Enforcement to make a report of the missing child. Caregivers are instructed to request to speak to the appropriate Watch Commander if a law enforcement officer refuses to take the report. Once the report has been taken or if the Watch Commander refuses to take the report, caregivers are instructed to contact the child's social worker or on-call staff to report all pertinent information.

The operating procedure instructs caregivers that if exigent circumstances do not exist, they are to follow a series of steps that include determining if any of the child's belongings are missing, if the child has left a note, or if the child has been seen, as well as locating any other information that may explain the child's missing status.

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

The operating procedure instructs the social worker to attempt to locate the child through specific state information sources and systems, to gather specific information in preparation for reporting the child as missing, and to notify certain persons, such as law enforcement, if the caregiver has not already done so. The social worker is instructed to speak to the appropriate Watch Commander if a law enforcement officer refuses to take the report. If the Watch Commander also refuses to take the report, the social worker is instructed to contact the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Missing Child Information Center. The operating procedures also provide detailed instructions on the full process to be followed by a social worker in reporting a child as missing.

Additionally, the operating procedure outlines the case management services that the social worker is required to perform while the child is missing. These include, but are not limited to, weekly efforts to locate the child during the first three months of the child's absence and interviewing the child's caregivers to determine if the child can be placed with them upon her/his return.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers or social workers when children are recovered?***

The operating procedures outline the response the worker is required to enact when the child returns to care. These include, but are not limited to, assuring that the child hears and sees statements of concern regarding her/his safety and well-being from the adults who have significant relations with her/him, informing designated parties that the child has been returned, and updating the Home Safe net (HSn) information system.

Resource

The Florida Department of Children and Families Missing Children List can be found at:
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/missingkids/>

- ***What resources are there for the public to assist in the return of children who run from care?***

The Florida Department of Children and Families Missing Children List provides a partial listing of the names and dates of birth for children who are missing from their placements. The website instructs the public to please notify law enforcement if they have any information on the children listed and provides a link to the FDLE website where the public may find more information on missing children. Information regarding the Department's efforts to locate these children may be requested by calling (850) 410-8543 or writing to the following address:
Missing Children Florida Department of Children and Families
1317 Winewood Blvd, Building 1, Room 206E
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700.

Illinois

Resource

Illinois Procedures 329 Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children can be found at:

http://dcfswebresource.prairienet.org/procedures/procedures_329/

The state of Illinois provides social workers, their supervisors, and caregivers with guidance and support through Procedures 329, Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children. The Procedures provide definitions, information on reporting requirements, requirements in searching for missing children, requirements for the return of missing, runaway, and abducted children who are within Illinois and out-of-state, as well as requirements for placement considerations. The Procedures also provide requirements when another agency or jurisdiction is legally responsible for runaway children, requirements on runaway children who are non-wards, and the role of the Child Location and Support Unit. Lastly, the Procedures give direction on completing specific forms, many of these forms can be found in the Procedure's Appendix.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers when children run from care?***

The Procedures outline the required steps for caregivers to take immediately after they realize a child is missing, including who to call and the phone number to use.

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

The Procedures outline the required steps for social workers to take *immediately* upon learning that a child is missing, including whom to contact and the phone numbers and forms to use, as well as related reports to be completed. For each specific form and report mentioned, guidance is given on pertinent information that must be included. Social workers are also directed to provide both law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children with a recent photograph of the child.

Additionally, the Procedures outline steps the social worker must take after a child has been missing for 24 hours. These include forms that must be completed, meetings that must be held, efforts that must be made, and communication with the Court. The Procedures describe the role of the Child Location and Support Unit for Missing Children, which supports and monitors the efforts of the social worker. Special requirements are listed for abducted children, missing children whose whereabouts are unknown, and missing children whose whereabouts are unknown and there is periodic contact by the child with the worker.

The Procedures also outline the requirements for social workers' supervisors. Supervisors must assure that the worker has completed all forms, reports, and contacts. The supervisor is instructed to work with the social worker to develop and implement a plan containing specific strategies to locate and assure the safety of the missing child as quickly as possible; the plan must include both daily and weekly activities. The Procedures provide a list of efforts that the supervisor must attend to and document during weekly meetings with the social worker that are dedicated to locating the missing child.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers or social workers when children are recovered?***

When a child is located in another state the Procedures provide directions on how the social worker must facilitate the return of the child, the steps to take if the child refuses to return to Illinois, the forms that must be completed and the appropriate times to complete them, and the payment for travel expenses.

When a child is located in Illinois, the Procedures provide directions on the steps that must be taken immediately by the social worker including what parties to contact and who is responsible for making travel arrangements for the youth.

The Procedures also prescribe the role of and instructions for the Emergency Reception Center in Cook County and the Child Location and Support Unit for Missing Children. Special instructions are given for downstate DCFS locations to use after hours, on weekends, and holidays.

Social workers are instructed that, once they have located and safely placed the child, they must interview the child, complete specific forms, contact specific parties, review the child's placement options, schedule a medical examination, determine what needs to be done to immediately resume the child's educational program, replace clothing or other personal items the child needs, revise the child's service plan, and take digital photographs of the child.

The Procedures guide the social worker in placement considerations for a current placement or a new or alternate placement. This includes forms that must be completed, consultation that must take place, and topics to cover in discussion with the child.

Iowa

Resource

The State of Iowa Department of Human Services Foster Care Services Employee's Manual can be found at:

http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/policyanalysis/PolicyManualPages/Manual_Documents/Master/13-i.pdf

Pages eighty-seven through ninety-four of the State of Iowa Department of Human Services Foster Care Services Employee's Manual provide information on the unauthorized absence of a child from placement. This policy instructs all social workers to use these processes uniformly to handle unauthorized absences. The policy provides definitions, initial steps a social worker is required to take when an unauthorized absence is suspected, when to report an unauthorized absence to Law Enforcement, guidance for social workers regarding pick-up orders, the AMBER Alert, and what to do when the child is believed to be in another state. The policy also outlines the procedures a social worker must complete when the child is found in Iowa or in another state. Guidance on negotiating with the child for her/his return and additional resources related to runaway children are listed as well.

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

The Manual instructs social workers to contact specific parties upon suspicion that a child is missing; this includes a requirement to contact the Court within two working days if the social worker believes that the parents or others are facilitating the child's absence or delinquency. If there is concern about the life or well-being of the child or if the child meets the definition of a "missing person", the policy states that the social worker should not hesitate to contact law enforcement and request that a child be listed immediately as a missing person. If assistance is needed with this process, the social worker is to contact the Iowa Missing Person Information Clearinghouse at 1/800/346-5507. The option of posting the youth's picture is also discussed.

The Manual states that law enforcement and other key parties should be contacted by the social worker on an ongoing basis when a child has been "on the run for a long period of time" in order to assess what is being done to locate the child and to gather any information about the child's whereabouts or activities. It also instructs the social worker to place a law enforcement agency pick-up order request when attempts to locate the child have been unsuccessful and states that the AMBER ALERT is only to be used when the child has been abducted and is in danger. The Manual informs social workers that if they believe the child is in another state, they are to contact Iowa law enforcement and request that they work with law enforcement in the other state to locate the missing child.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers or social workers when children are recovered?***

This policy provides a list of tasks the social worker must complete when a child is located in Iowa and a list of tasks the social worker must complete when a child is found outside of Iowa. Both lists include appropriate parties to contact. The Manual states that it is appropriate at times to negotiate with the child regarding her/his return and provides additional resources that may be useful in the process of locating and returning runaway children.

New Mexico

Resource

New Mexico's State Statute 32A-14-3, which governs law enforcement agencies' responsibilities for missing children can be found at:

<http://www.conwaygreene.com/nmsu/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&2.0>

- ***What resources are there for law enforcement when children run from care?***

Statute 32A-3 informs law enforcement agencies that upon receiving a report of a child believed to be missing, they must immediately enter identifying and descriptive information about the child into the national crime information center computer. If they do not have access to the national crime information center computer, they must work cooperatively with another law enforcement agency that does have access. Law enforcement must also notify the state registrar within twenty-four hours, by telephone, facsimile or electronic transmission, of the missing child. Within three days of this initial notification, the law enforcement agency must make a written notification in the manner and form prescribed by the state registrar. The statute describes the specific information that must be included within the written notification.

- ***What resources are there for law enforcement when children are recovered?***

Statute 32A-3 informs law enforcement agencies that locate or return a missing child, if their agency did not have jurisdiction over the investigation they must immediately notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. The originating agency must then clear the entry from the national crime information center computer and, within twenty-four hours, notify the state registrar in writing that the missing child has been located.

North Carolina

Resource

Chapter IV: 1201 Child Placement Services, of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services State Manuals, includes the Agency Plan for Abducted or Runaway Foster Children. The Agency Plan for Abducted or Runaway Foster Children can be found at:

http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-08.htm#P236_39288

The Agency Plan for Abducted or Runaway Foster Children requires each county Department of Social Services in North Carolina to have an agency policy regarding missing foster children that addresses both prevention and recovery issues. The agency's policy must describe steps it will take to prevent the abduction or runaway of a foster child. The Agency Plan for Abducted or Runaway Foster Children provides recommendations for counties to use as they develop policies to address the prevention and recovery of abducted and runaway foster children.

- ***What resources are there for local jurisdictions to use in developing policies to address the issue of children who run from care?***

The Agency Plan for Abducted or Runaway Foster Children provides twenty-six recommendations to guide jurisdictions' on the development of policies to address the issue of children who run from care. The recommendations include, but are not limited to, areas of prevention, case management, case documentation, and efforts that must be made to locate the missing child.

Michigan

Resource

The Michigan Department of Human Services website for missing children can be found at:
<http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/awol/default.asp>

- ***What resources are there for the public to assist in the return of children who run from care?***

The Michigan Department of Human Services website for missing children implores, “Help Us Locate These Missing Children!” The website contains information about and, when available, pictures of Michigan children who have been reported to law enforcement as runaways or potential abductions. This information is provided by the state because it is believed the children are at risk, and it is in the best interest of these children that they be located. It directs the public to contact the toll free Child Locator Tip Line if a person has any information about any of the children listed. The website informs the public that the Michigan Missing Children Information Clearinghouse contains information about additional children at risk and provides a link for a summary of child locator activities.

Resource

The Michigan Department of Human Services Children’s Foster Care Manual contains a section entitled Children Absent without Legal Permission Placement. This section can be found on page twenty-four of the PDF document provided below:
<http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cff/722-3.pdf>

- ***What resources are there for caregivers when children run from care?***

The Michigan Department of Human Services Children’s Foster Care Manual contains a section entitled Children Absent without Legal Permission which informs caregivers that they must immediately (within one hour) notify law enforcement agencies (state police, local police or the sheriff’s department) and the supervising agency when a child under their care fails to return at the expected time. The foster care worker must be notified the next working day.

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

Children Absent without Legal Permission directs the social worker to notify the court, the child’s parents, and the child’s lawyer-guardian ad litem within twenty-four hours of learning a child is missing. Within twenty-four hours or one business day, the social worker must also update the child’s information in the foster care information system (SWSS FAJ) and confirm that the child has been entered into the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) as missing and endangered. If law enforcement will not enter the child into the LEIN, the social worker must document this in the case record and forward the information to the Child Locator Centralized Unit.

Children Absent without Legal Permission requires the social worker to commence a diligent search for the child within forty-eight hours or two business days. The actions that are required to complete the diligent search are provided. The social worker is required to keep the court and law enforcement informed of the status and progress of the diligent search. The diligent search must be repeated during every reporting period and all efforts of the search must be documented by the social worker.

Washington

Resource

The Washington State Children's Administration Practices and Procedures Guide Chapter 4000 Child Welfare Services, Section 4550- Children Missing from Care can be found at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/ppGuide/Chapter4.pdf>

Section 4550- Children Missing from Care explains that children missing from care are at great risk for victimization and exploitation. Social workers and caregivers must consider a child missing from care as a major event that requires intensive and ongoing intervention. The policy provides definitions including three categories that missing children may fall into, 1) taken from placement, 2) absence not authorized, whereabouts unknown, and 3) absence not authorized, whereabouts known. Additionally, the policy provides requirements for intake workers, regional offices, headquarters, and social workers' supervisors. The policy describes requirements for caregivers when they realize the child is missing, for social workers while the child is missing, and for social workers and caregivers after a child has returned to care.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers when children run from care?***

Section 4550- Children Missing from Care states that both licensed and unlicensed caregivers are required to report to their assigned Children's Administration social worker and law enforcement when a child is missing from their care. This reporting must be done directly and cannot be a message left on voice mail. If necessary the caregiver must contact the intake hotline. The section explains that the report must be made within specific timeframes, it provides the timeframes, and lists guidelines for the timeframes. The section also lists the specific information that the caregiver is required to include in her/his reports to the social worker and law enforcement.

- ***What resources are there for social workers when children run from care?***

Section 4550 Children Missing from Care states that when a social worker learns a child is missing from care, she/he must immediately confirm the child's status with the caregiver, confirm that the caregiver has followed all required protocols, obtain the runaway report number, insure that complete report information has been given to law enforcement and the Washington State Patrol Missing Children Clearinghouse, and appropriately document the report number. Complete information for the Washington State Patrol Missing Children Clearinghouse is provided. The section directs social workers to complete particular reports and to maintain communication with key parties within required timeframes. These parties include, but are not limited, to the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), the CASA/GAL, and the child's school.

Section 4550 instructs social workers to work collaboratively with their supervisors to develop and implement strategies for actively searching for a child that is missing from care. This effort includes a staffing that must be held within three business days of the child leaving care and then weekly during the first month of the child leaving care. A Missing Child Staffing Checklist is to be completed during the initial meeting and then reviewed at each subsequent meeting. After the child has been missing for thirty days, the social worker and supervisor must meet monthly to review progress and changes on the active search for the child. This section outlines specific documentation requirements for the social worker while the child is missing from care. The social worker is also required to contact the caregiver and determine whether

or not this caregiver is a placement option upon the child's return. If this caregiver is not an option the social worker must identify other preliminary placement options for the child.

- ***What resources are there for caregivers or social workers when children are recovered?***

When a child is located or returns to care, the social worker is required to notify specific parties within specific timeframes. This includes a completing a face-to-face debriefing with the child within two business days in conjunction with a Returning to Care De-briefing Form. These contacts must be documented appropriately. Additionally, the social worker has to work with the child to get her/him appropriate medical treatment as soon as possible if the child discloses any of the specific medical concerns listed in this section. The social worker must provide the child with information from the National Runaway Hotline or other relevant resources, collaborate with the child to develop a plan to address the child's safety, placement stability and service needs, place a current photograph of the child in her/his case file, and update the child's placement status. Within three business days, the social worker must convene a meeting with the child to review the child's needs and placement options and other resources to support the child.

Resource

Information and resources on Washington's efforts to improve both policy and practice regarding children who run from foster care, can be obtained from:

Tim Kelly, MA

Adolescent Unit

Division of Program & Practice Improvement

Children's Administration

Department of Social and Health Services

Phone: (360) 902-7772

Email: KETD300@dshs.wa.gov

- ***What resources are there for children when they run from care?***

Washington has created a toll-free hotline (1-877-550-HOPE) that foster youth can call in order to find a safe supportive place to sleep, eat, and receive guidance while they are experiencing homelessness. To provide children with this information, the state has created and widely distributed a business-sized card that states, (FRONT) "Do you want off the street tonight?" and (BACK) "If you don't have anywhere to stay, call this number to find a Hope Bed. They won't be judgmental! They can offer you food, a bed, and help you figure out your options for what to do next. For people 13-17 years of age."

Prepared by:

Kerrin Sweet, MSW

Program Coordinator, Juvenile Justice Division

Child Welfare League of America

ksweet@cwla.org

August 14, 2006

Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

September 8, 2006

**Michigan Hall of Justice Conference Center
Lansing, Michigan**

Michigan Department of Human Services/ Law Enforcement Collaboration

Faculty:

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(313) 297-5240 FAX
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This program is funded by a federal Children's Justice Act grant to the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice administered through the Michigan Department of Human Services, under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Administration of Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA 93.643, being section 107(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) as amended (42 USC 5101 *et seq.*); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended (42 USC 10601 *et seq.*) In addition, this is a joint project of the State Court Administrative Office and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, chaired by the Honorable Elizabeth A. Weaver, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Michigan Department of Human Services

MEDIA ATTENTION 2002

- Florida Foster Child Lost
Rilya Wilson
Age: 4
Status: Still missing
- Detroit Free Press Headline
"Agency Has Lost Track of Hundreds of it's
Children"
- Michigan AWOLP Foster Child Murdered
Heather Kish
Age: 15

DHS Responds

AWOLP Bulletins:

- AWOLP policy quickly distributed to county DHS
offices and Private Child Placing agencies
- CPS includes pictures of children in 5 day packet
- Pictures updated in SWSS annually
- Each county designates an AWOLP Coordinator
- LEIN entry clarification "Missing-Endangered"
- LEIN removal when child located
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

DHS Responds

- AWOLP Bulletins can be reviewed on the DHS Web site.
- <http://intranet-01.mfia.state.mi.us/AWOLP/AWOLP.html>

DHS Responds

DHS AWOLP Policy

- Report AWOLP to law enforcement within 1 hour
- Update SWSS within 1 day
- Have AWOLP child entered in LEIN
- Confirm LEIN entry of child
- 48 hours complete diligent search for child notify court/law enforcement of outcome
- At least quarterly repeat diligent search

DHS Responds

Missing Children Web site:

<http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/awol/>

Tip Line:

1-866-729-0026

DHS Responds

Child Locator Unit

Fax: 517-241-7047

Audrey Walter

Phone: 517-335-6944

Email: Waltera2@michigan.gov

Jennifer Montague

Phone: 517-335-6945

Email: Montaguej@michigan.gov

Child Locator Unit (CLU)

Collaborate and coordinate efforts with:

- Law Enforcement
- Courts
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
- State Clearinghouses
- DHS County Offices

Child Locator Unit

- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency for assistance if one is not already involved.
- Research possible locations for missing child by utilizing available data bases.
- Forward leads to law enforcement/DHS local office.

Child Locator Unit

- SWSS
- CIMS
- Accurint
- LEIN
- Secretary of State
- Intersect
- SNAP
- Various internet resources

Child Locator Unit

- Check LEIN (Law Enforcement Information Network) and NCIC (National Crime Information Center) entries for all AWOLP youth.
- "Missing Endangered" LEIN entry should occur immediately for AWOLP youth.
- "Missing Endangered" entry can occur until age 21
- 17 year old AWOLP's problematic for law enforcement due to 17 year olds considered emancipated juveniles
- AWOLP's under the age of 11 also problematic – LEIN entry only accepted as "Missing Endangered"

LEIN Example

KAOSHA, Age 14

- 04/28/2004 Never returned from school
- 04/29/2004 Missing person report filed with local PD
- 06/09/2005 CLU receives case from FC Worker
 - Child never entered in LEIN
 - Investigator never assigned
- 08/23/2005 Local PD lost missing person report
- 08/24/2005 Youth Officer assigned to investigate & LEIN Entry obtained

LEIN Example

KAOSHA, Age 14

- 10/03/2005 Kaosha MCI Ward
- 12/12/2005 LEIN entry removed by local PD, child not located, Court/DHS not notified child taken out of LEIN
- 12/14/2005 Kaosha 16, arrested by local PD in drug raid then released to her mother, who's parental rights were terminated
- 03/02/2006 Kaosha entered in LEIN by Sheriff's Department
- 06/13/06 child located by FC Worker/Local PD

Under Utilized Resources

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com
- Amber Alert
www.amberalertmichigan.org
- State Clearinghouse
Contact Child Locator Unit for specific State Clearinghouse information

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

- Technical Case Assistance
- 24-Hour Hotline
- Leads, Sightings and Information Dissemination
- Photograph, Poster Preparation and Rapid Distribution
- Age Enhancement Photo Reconstruction
- Expert Investigative On-Site Assistance

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

- Information Analysis Services
- Queries and Database Searches
- Forensic Services

NCMEC Contact Information

- Referrals to the NCMEC can be made by either Foster Care Workers or Law Enforcement

1-800-THE-LOST

NCMEC Case Example

Jessica, Age 16

- AWOLP 04/20/2005
- Detective assigned to case
- NCMEC referral made: Posters disbursed
- Concerns of prostitution, substance abuse and drug sales
- Det. tracked Jessica's activities to the following locations:
Washington, Tennessee, Oregon, Florida, Canada

NCMEC Case Example

Jessica, Age 16

- 03/24/06 Jessica, age 17, saw her NCMEC missing poster in a Wal-Mart in Boise, Idaho and called DHS and reported her location
- Children's Services in Idaho completed a welfare check on Jessica
- Jessica reported that she was pregnant and requested permission from DHS to get married

Amber Alert Criteria

Child must be under 17 and one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- The child is a victim of stranger or acquaintance kidnapping.
- The child is in the company of a person who has a confirmed criminal history of child abuse/neglect, sexual assault, domestic assault, or a crime involving the victimization of children, or has made statements of intent to harm the missing child, or is suicidal.
- Child has a mental or physical disability that greatly impairs the child's ability to care for him/herself.
- The child has been abducted by a non-custodial parent whose parental rights have been terminated by a court.

Amber Alert Success

Travion, Age 4

- Travion age 4, Temp. Court Ward
- Travion placed in foster care with teenage mother, also Temp. Court Ward
- Agency petitioning for removal from mother
- Mother AWOLP's with child

Amber Alert Success

Travion, Age 4

- Both mother and child immediately entered in LEIN by local PD
- Child has medical alert in LEIN
- Amber Alert pursued by CLU with local PD
- Amber Alert issued
- Child recovered within 3 hours by local PD

State Clearinghouses

- Each state has a missing child clearing house.
- Can be utilized when AWOLP child is believed to have left the state
- Will coordinate with appropriate law enforcement agencies to locate the AWOLP child

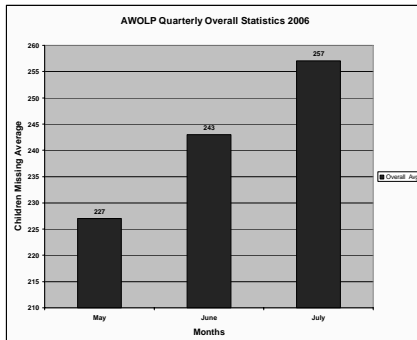
State Clearinghouses

- Assistance can be requested by investigating law enforcement agency or foster care worker
- LEIN/NCIC entry
- Valid apprehension order from court to place the child in protective custody
- Forward required information to Clearinghouse

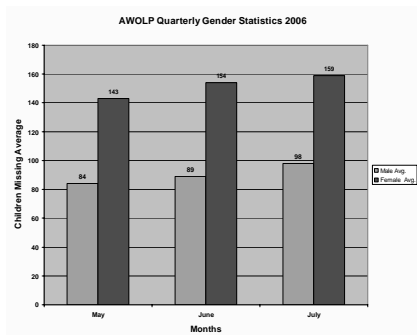
AWOLP's Located Out of State

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Ohio
- Louisiana
- Texas
- Idaho
- Florida
- Oregon

AWOLP Statistics



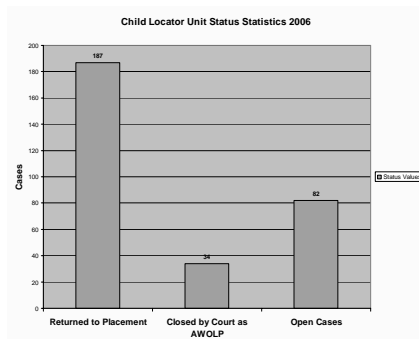
AWOLP Statistics



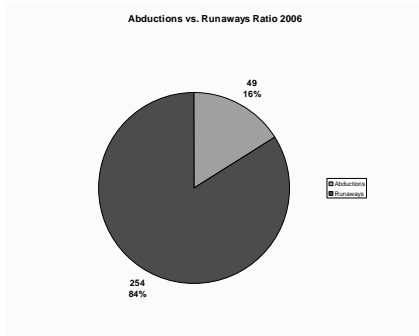
Child Locator Unit Statistics

- The Child Locator Unit has assisted in attempting to locate 303 AWOLP children, since the inception of the program in May of 2005.

AWOLP Statistics

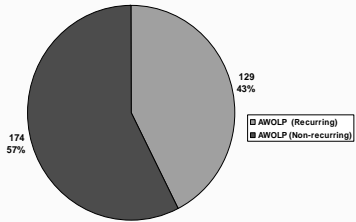


AWOLP Statistics



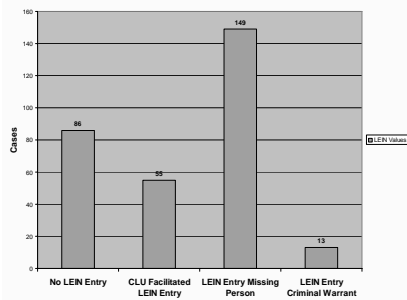
AWOLP Statistics

Recurring vs. Non-recurring AWOLP Statistics 2006



AWOLP Statistics

LEIN Entry Statistics 2006



Process Improvement

Strides forward between DHS and Law Enforcement cooperation:

- Web Unit for Wayne County Kids
- Missing person entries into LEIN and NCIC more the norm now than the exception
- Law enforcement assisting DHS in checking probable locations for AWOLP youth

Process Improvement

- Case Workers have improved on updating child photos, characteristics and placements in SWSS.
- Foster Care and CPS Workers are utilizing the resources available within the Child Locator Unit to help return our children to placement.

In the Works...

- Developing CPS Policy for AWOLP children
- The ability to flag missing AWOLP children in DHS shared databases so that CPS, Foster Care and Payment Assistance Workers have access to this information statewide
- Continue to build relationships with Law Enforcement agencies in order to:
 - Utilize Amber Alerts
 - Have a detective/investigating officer assigned to each AWOLP child

In the Works...

- Media Releases
- Series of articles in Flint Journal regarding AWOLP youth
- Result, 6 children located shortly after articles printed

A Vision for Change....

- Making sure all children are entered into LEIN and NCIC quickly and correctly.
- Every AWOLP youth reported as missing person to law enforcement, prompting a law enforcement investigator to be assigned
 - Police report complaint # documented and copy of report kept in case file
- Connect abducting parents names with missing child's name in LEIN/NCIC
- Work with law enforcement and prosecutors to obtain warrants on absconding parents and/or relatives

A Vision for Change....

- Continue to improve collaboration between DHS and Law Enforcement.
- Amber Alerts to be utilized when the criteria is met
- Further educate local DHS offices about Amber Alerts so that they are better able to navigate the law enforcement system to obtain them
- Law enforcement agencies in turn to initiate Amber Alerts on AWOLP children when warranted

A Vision for Change....

- Have Detectives assigned to Child Locator Unit to assist on all missing child cases
- Develop standardized documentation for information regarding child's AWOLP status:
 - Where child was during time missing
 - Who child was with
 - Health care information
 - Nutrition information
 - Abduction information
 - Possible criminal activities exposed to/involved with

A Vision for Change....

- Accuracy in SWSS regarding AWOLP children to continue to make steady improvements
- Research and implement specialized services for AWOLP population to reduce repeated AWOLP's.
- Become more proactive regarding female AWOLP population by researching and initiating prevention services to reduce ratio of female vs. male AWOLP population.
- Better placement options for AWOLP youth

Becoming Better Advocates

- Many of our AWOLP children do not have family members to advocate for them.
- As an agency we must continue to advocate for the safe return of our AWOLP youth.
- Imagine if it was your child or a child in your family
 - Would you give up at the first roadblock that comes your way?
 - Don't be afraid to go up the chain of command.
 - At times, it involves talking with several people before you get to the person that can best assist you.

AWOLP -
CHILDREN ABSENT
WITHOUT LEGAL
PERMISSION
PLACEMENT

Direct Service
Case

Foster parents/relative/unrelated caregivers, parents and residential facility staff must **immediately** (within 1 hour) notify law enforcement agencies (state police, local police or the sheriff's department) and the supervising agency when a ward under their care fails to return at the expected time.

The supervising agency shall establish procedures to implement this policy during non-working hours. The FC worker must be notified the next working day.

Within 24 hours of notification, the FC worker or local office designee must notify:

- The court of jurisdiction
- The parents, if appropriate
- Lawyer-Guardian ad litem (LGAL)

The FC worker or local office designee must take the following action within 24 hours/1 business day of notification:

- Update the following information in SWSS FAJ:
 - Child Information - enter/update Child's Characteristics
 - Placement:
 - Change living arrangement to 20 - AWOLP
 - Indicate Reason for Absence:
 - Never in care
 - Abduction
 - Location known but not approved
 - Runaway
 - Indicate Risk to the Child with Narrative:
 - Is at serious risk
 - Is 11 years of age or younger
 - Foul play is suspected
 - None of the above
 - Indicate special circumstances, e.g., child should not be placed on the web and reasons why

- List possible locations where the child may be found
- Document action taken to find child
- Enter contact name for local law enforcement
- Payment Module - end payment for placement according to CFF 903-7, Placement Interruptions
- Complete the DHS - 3198A, "The Unauthorized Leave Report to the Court/Law Enforcement"
- Send one copy to the court
- Send/Take the second copy of the DHS-3198A to the local law enforcement to ensure that the child/youth is entered on the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) as MISSING and ENDANGERED
- Retain copy in the case file
- Confirm that child has been entered on LEIN and document in case file. If local law enforcement will not place child on LEIN, the worker must document in case record and forward information to the Child Locator Centralized Unit.

The Child Locator Centralized Unit will take the following action:

- Receive e-mail notification generated by SWSS FAJ that child is AWOLP
- Review the electronic case record for completeness of file
- Determine if child will be placed on the Child Locator Website
- Notify Local Office via reply e-mail of determination or need for additional information

Note: Not all children in AWOLP placement will be placed on the Child Locator Website. In general, the following children will not be placed on the web:

- Youth age 18 years and older
- Youth age 17 where placement is known but not approved
- Child with an open juvenile justice case

Circumstances may allow exceptions.

Within 48 hours/2 business days of notification, the FC worker must commence a diligent service for the child. Actions required are:

- Review any available DHS case records/SWSS FAJ records to identify information on the potential location of child/youth (family members, unrelated caregiver, friends, known associates, churches, neighborhood center, etc.)
- Contact the school that the child last attended:
 - Verify that the child is not in attendance
 - Determine if there are friends/teachers of the child that may have information
- Contact the local school district office(s) to determine if child has enrolled in a new school
- Complete automated systems checks to search for child or known family members (CIMS/ASSIST, Secretary of State, LEIN)
- Review Medical Passport and medical records in case file and determine if there are:
 - Outstanding medical needs and contact physician
 - Medication needs and contact pharmacy
- Document results of all contacts in file

The FC worker or local office designee must notify the court and law enforcement of the results from the search.

At a minimum, the FC worker will repeat a diligent search during every reporting period. The worker will document all efforts to locate a child and any child initiated contacts in the case record using the AWOLP Locator Checklist. This information must also be documented in the USP and court reports.

The FC worker must continue to notify law enforcement of any new information to aid in their efforts to locate the youth.

Purchase of Service Case

Immediately (within 1 hour), foster parents/relative/unrelated caregivers, parents and residential facility staff must notify law enforcement agencies and their supervising agency when the ward under their care has filed to return at the expected time.

Immediately, within 1 hour of notification, the supervising agency will file a missing person report with the local law enforcement.

Immediately, within 1 hour of notification, the supervising agency will notify the DHS Children's Services Monitoring Specialist, or designee, of the child's AWOLP status.

The child placing agency (CPA) shall establish procedures to implement this policy during non-working hours. The FC worker must be notified the next working day.

Within 24 hours of notification, the supervising agency must notify the:

- Court of jurisdiction
- Parents, if appropriate
- Lawyer Guardian ad litem (LGAL)

Within 24 hours/1 business day, the supervising agency of notification will:

- Document action taken to find the child
- Notify the DHS monitoring worker of any additional information
- Forward a copy of the DHS-3198A to the local law enforcement to ensure that the child/youth is entered on LEIN as MISSING and ENDANGERED
- Forward copy of the DHS-3198A to the court
- Forward a copy of the DHS-3198A and the child's current photo to the DHS monitoring worker

Within 24 hours/1 business day of receipt of the DHS-3198A, the DHS monitoring worker or designee will:

- Update the information in SWSS FAJ (see above)
- Confirm that child has been entered in LEIN and document in case
- Provide any information needed by the Centralized Unit for the Child Locator Website

Within 48 hours/2 business days of notification, the supervising agency must commence a diligent search for the child by the following actions:

- Review case record to identify information on the potential location of child/youth (family members, unrelated caregiver, friends, known associates, churches, neighborhood center, etc.)
- Contact the school that the child last attended
 - Verify that the child is not in attendance
 - Determine if there are friends/teachers of the child that may have information
- Contact the local school district office(s) to determine if child has enrolled in a new school

- Review Medical Passport and medical records in the case file and determine if there are:
 - Outstanding medical needs and contact physician
 - Medication needs and contact pharmacy
- Document information in agency file
- Forward any new results of contacts to the court, law enforcement and the DHS monitoring worker

Within 48 hours/2 business days of notification, the DHS monitoring worker or designee must commence a diligent search for the child by the following actions:

- Complete automated systems checks to search for child or known family members (CIMS/ASSIST, Secretary of State and LEIN)
- Review any additional DHS case records/SWSS FAJ records to identify information on the potential location of child/youth (family members, unrelated caregiver, friends, known associates, churches, neighborhood centers)
- Forward any new information to the court, law enforcement and the supervising agency.

At a minimum, the supervising agency and the DHS monitoring worker will repeat a diligent search during every reporting period. The workers must document all efforts to locate a child and any child initiated contacts in the case record using the AWOLP Locator Checklist. This information must also be documented in the USP and court reports.

The FC worker must continue to notify law enforcement of any further new information.

IMPORTANT!!

The person identified on the attached Missing Person Report form is under the care and supervision of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and is Absent Without Legal Permission (AWOLP).

Effective 10/24/02 CJIS Policy Council approved that persons under the care of DHS must be entered in the LEIN Missing Person file under the category of:

MISSING – “ENDANGERED”

Thank you for your cooperation.

AWOLP Bulletin 11

To: **County Directors
District Office Managers**

Date: August 2, 2006

From: **Jim Nye Deputy Director
Field Operations Administration**

Subject: Child Locator Unit (AWOLP Bulletin #11)

Response Due: None

It has come to the attention of the Child Locator Unit that there have been concerns about confidentiality issues when involving the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to help locate our AWOLP youth. This Bulletin is to inform staff that it is appropriate to involve the NCMEC in helping to locate our AWOLP youth.

The NCMEC can be reached at 1-800-The -LOST. The referral must be made by either the case worker or law enforcement. The NCMEC can provide the following services:

- Technical-Case Assistance
- 24-Hour Hotline
- Leads/Sightings and Information Dissemination
- Photograph and Poster Preparation and Rapid Distribution
- Age Enhancement for photos
- Expert Investigative On-Site Assistance
- Information Analysis Services
- Queries and Database Searches
- Forensic Services

Once the child is located and returned to an appropriate placement please ensure that the NCMEC as well as all other investigating agencies are promptly notified.

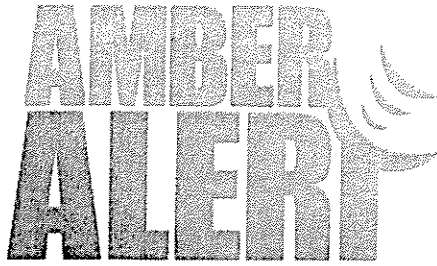
Just a reminder AWOLP cases can be forwarded to:

Child Locator Unit

Jennifer Montague 517-335-6945; MontagueJ@Michigan.Gov
Audrey Walter 517-335-6944; WalterA2@Michigan.Gov
235 S. Grand Ave.
Lansing, MI 48909

Thank you for your assistance in helping to locate our AWOLP children.

82 What You Need To Know



WHAT IS THE MICHIGAN AMBER ALERT PLAN

The Michigan Amber Alert plan is a partnership between law enforcement and the media to help in the immediate dissemination of information to the public about an endangered missing child. Amber Alert of Michigan is supported by the Michigan Department of State Police, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Sheriff's Association, the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

HOW DOES LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVATE THE MICHIGAN AMBER ALERT PLAN

An endangered missing person under 17 years of age is reported to law enforcement, and one or more of the following circumstances exist;

- The child suffers from a severe mental or physical disability that greatly impairs the child's ability to care for him/herself.
- The child is a victim of stranger or acquaintance kidnapping.
(MCL 750.349) Stranger kidnapping is defined as a child being taken against his/her will by a stranger. Acquaintance kidnapping is defined as a child being taken against his/her will by an acquaintance of the child or the child's family.
- The child is in the company of a person who has a confirmed criminal history of child abuse/neglect, sexual assault, domestic assault, or a crime involving the victimization of children, or has made statements of intent to harm the missing child, or is suicidal.
- The child has been abducted by a non-custodial parent whose parental rights have been terminated by a court.

Amber Alert cannot be activated for a runaway child or a child who is a victim of a parental abduction involved in a civil dispute.

1. The law enforcement agency investigating the endangered missing child case contacts the Michigan State Police, supplying information on the case. The Michigan State Police activate the Michigan Amber Alert Plan by giving information on the endangered missing child to area broadcasters.
2. Broadcasters immediately break broadcasting after learning of the Amber Alert activation. Broadcasters supply the listening public information on the endangered missing child.
3. The Public actively searches for the endangered missing child after hearing the Amber Alert activation on radio or television, reporting any sightings to law enforcement.



Everything Michigan

THE FLINT JOURNAL

IN TOUCH IN DEPTH INVOLVED

Lost

State trying to crack down on runaways from foster homes

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, June 04, 2006

By Ron Fonger

rfonger@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6317

Genesee County - When adult filmmakers were looking for the perfect new girl next door in 2004, they had no trouble spotting Stephanie Draheim, a freckle-faced 18-year-old from Flint.

But finding the same runaway foster child turned into a frustrating game of cat and mouse for the state Department of Human Services and an end result that state Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan told The Flint Journal is "very disturbing."

For 20 months, Draheim flew under the state's radar, running away at age 15 and ending up in Florida, more than 1,000 miles from the social workers who were charged with looking out for her.

By the time she was discharged from Michigan's foster care system in 2004, Draheim was headed to X-rated stardom, performing in 13 different pornographic films that year. Some may have been filmed while she was still an 18-year-old ward of the state, a Journal review of court files and other documents shows.

"Whenever I see a story like Stephanie Draheim's, it's like somehow we all failed her," said Karen Bunker, an attorney whose Child Advocate Team briefly represented her in Genesee County Family Court.

Corrigan called Draheim's case an example of what can happen to foster children who run from the system set up to protect them from abuse and neglect. Too often, she said, they find trouble - even death - as they look for a place to stay and money to survive on their own.

Draheim was one of 15 children from Genesee County and 230 from Michigan were missing from foster care when Corrigan, as chief justice, ordered local family judges throughout the state to step up efforts to find and keep track of runaways in late 2002.

Today, even more - 19 - are missing from the county, and the state's numbers are steady. Some, like Draheim, have been on the run for more than a year.

Corrigan said foster children who run away in Michigan today are more likely

QUICK TAKE

Adrift in foster care

Here's a look at how Flint native Stephanie Draheim went from abandoned child to ward of the state to foster care runaway to adult film star:

- Dec. 26, 1985: Stephanie is born at McLaren Regional Medical Center to Kristen L. Walton and Robert Draheim Jr.

- Nov. 26, 1986: Stephanie's mother sues James D. Walton, Stephanie's legal father, for divorce in Genesee County.

- 1988: Maternal grandmother Sue Rushton of Montrose, who could not be reached for this article, is made Stephanie's legal guardian. In a handwritten letter to Genesee County Family Court, Rushton says she brought Stephanie and her half-sister to her home after their mother called her from Florida "in an unstable condition."

to be found than they were three years ago. She doesn't fault the judges or the system in the Draheim case, but things aren't perfect.

With more social workers and money, the state could have checked on Draheim face to face after she ran across state lines, rather than relying on help from Florida social workers.

"We're doing better, ... but we can do better every day," Corrigan said. "This is a work in progress."

No new leads

Special monthly hearings begun three years ago after the Supreme Court edicts require state caseworkers to report progress in attempting to find runaways. But there was little hopeful news at hearings in May, presided over by Genesee County Family Court referee Peggy Odette:

- Nicole Bovee, 17, has run away before - probably four times, a caseworker said. This time, she has been missing since mid-March. No new leads.
- A caseworker is looking for two sisters, Ashley and Natasha Sawyers, 14 and 16. Their mother has never attended any of the monthly hearings since the sisters turned up missing - Natasha in August and Ashley in January. No new leads.
- During the hearing for 17-year-old Henry Marshall - missing since September - an attorney appointed by the court to represent him tells Odette, "He's figured out ways to make sure he's not found."
- Kristina Pringle, 17, who walked away from court after a judge decided to place her in foster care in January, still hasn't been found, but her mother told Odette she knows where her daughter has been hiding.
- There could be a new lead that helps find Kaosha Stephens, 16, who has been missing since April 30, 2004. Police found her a few months ago when a house where she was staying was hit in a drug raid, but an information glitch allowed her to walk away.

"These kids are street smart. If they don't want to be found, they are hard to find," Odette said. "Occasionally, they will be located and come back, (but) we can't lock them up forever."

DHS officials will talk only in generalities about missing foster children. They would not discuss how they lost track of Stephanie Draheim, what efforts were made to find her or why she was allowed to stay in Florida once she was found there.

Court files indicate that DHS in Genesee County received a report from Florida almost four months after it made an inquiry in late 2002, indicating Draheim's home there was approved for her to stay in - but her grandparents moved in 2003, and Draheim moved in with a friend.

A top DHS official now says supervision of kids in the system has improved.

"We want to engage them around planning for their future (and) find a placement for them where they will not run," said Mary Mehren, manager of Foster Care and Children's Protective Services for the state.

"The (missing) children are typically 14-17, typically more independent, and

Rushton tells her daughter she will care for the children - "these precious little girls" - until she can put her life in order.

● July 24, 1991: In an annual report to Family Court, Stephanie's grandparents describe her as a polite, thoughtful child. "We're very cramped for space, but we are financially unable to move," they say.

● Nov. 12, 1993: Rushton says in a court filing that Stephanie, 7, is "temporarily with (her biological) father," living in a Flint mobile home park.

● 1995: Stephanie is in the third grade at Carter Elementary School in Montrose. She enjoys Girl Scouts, roller skating and movies, according to court files.

● 1996: Rushton requests termination of her guardianship, saying she is short of cash, facing eviction and can no longer care for her granddaughters.

● May 1996: Stephanie continues to live with Robert Draheim, her biological father, who has no parental rights. Following up on a tip, the Department of Human Services determines Draheim was leaving his daughter at home alone and driving while intoxicated with Stephanie in his vehicle. She is 10 years old.

● Dec. 5, 1996: A state caseworker says, "There are no relatives to take Stephanie at this point in time" and requests that she be

when we intervene and remove them (from home), they pretty much have been living on their own (already)," Mehren said. "When you place them in a foster home that is typically more restrictive, ... they rebel against that."

Stephanie's story

The Flint Journal could not reach Draheim despite attempts to contact her through relatives, a former agent, former foster parents and an apartment complex where she has lived in Florida.

DHS records show the state considered Draheim missing from Aug. 10, 2001, when she was just 15, until caseworkers found she had run to Florida.

She had been there before: It was where her mother had taken her when she was a baby - and where her grandmother, Sue Rushton, had rescued her before she turned 2.

Court supervision of Draheim continued until May 2004, and she continued to be a ward of the state until July 12, 2004, the same year adult films featuring her started to be released.

The last reports filed in Family Court by DHS said Draheim was not employed since quitting a job at Domino's Pizza, and noted social workers have had "no face to face contact."

Neither had Bunker, whose Child Advocate Team took over representation of Draheim just months before her case was dismissed.

CAT contracted with the county in an effort to improve representation of children, promising to meet face to face with them - something that hadn't always been done here.

In Draheim's case, Bunker recalled confusion about Draheim's whereabouts and no information on where she was staying.

"You look back and wonder, is there anything you could have done that could have made a difference if you took one extra step?" she said.

This baby needs love'

The call from Draheim's mother was chilling.

In a handwritten letter to Genesee County Family Court, Rushton, formerly of Montrose, said her daughter, Kristen Walton, called her in an "unstable condition in 1988, asking her to come immediately and take Draheim and her older half-sister back home with her.

"I flew the next morning and returned the same day with the understanding I would care for them until she could put her life in order," Rushton's letter said.

Neither her mother nor her biological or legal father did.

One caseworker wrote in a report that Draheim had "no contact whatsoever with her mother. ... No gifts ... no financial support ... no telephone calls."

Rushton, who could not be reached for this story, told the court that her granddaughter needed to know someone would be there for her.

committed to the care and supervision of the state just days before her 11th birthday.

- May 6, 1997: A petition in Genesee County court seeks to terminate the parental rights of Stephanie's legal father, biological father and mother - each because of neglect. The state requests that Stephanie be placed for adoption. The request is later granted.

- May 21, 1998: In an unpublished opinion, the Michigan Court of Appeals upholds the county court decision that terminated Stephanie's mother's parental rights.

- Aug. 10, 2001: Stephanie, 15, runs away from the Flint area foster care home where she is staying after completing the ninth grade.

- Feb. 6, 2002: Judge Thomas Gadola presides over a hearing where Stephanie is determined to still be missing.

- Aug. 7, 2002: A pickup order is issued, and later this same month, a warrant is issued as Stephanie remains missing.

- Dec. 11, 2002: A caseworker says Stephanie is "living in Florida with her grandparents and attending school." Before the close of the year, the pickup order is canceled after county DHS workers start working with Florida officials about setting up a supervision plan.

"This baby needs love and stable living conditions," she wrote soon after taking Draheim in.

But Rushton, who had money problems, was later evicted from her own home. By 1996, Stephanie was living with her biological father, Robert Draheim, in a Flint mobile home park.

Court records indicate a caseworker started the process of taking her from her parents and putting her up for adoption after tips that Robert Draheim was leaving his daughter at home alone and driving drunk with Stephanie in his vehicle.

Like most children over age 11 in foster care, Stephanie Draheim was never adopted. She lived in six foster homes and ran away from at least two.

"She was intelligent, but the more intelligent they are, the more trouble they can get into," said Rodger Mead of Burton, one of the last foster parents Draheim stayed with.

She was careful with her possessions, keeping everything she had locked up. Mead suspected Draheim was stealing, too, before deciding to end the foster care arrangement after one month.

"She came here with about eight boxes and tried to walk out with 12," he said. "She was into possessions, and, of course, I can see why."

Cindy Kelzer of Fostoria said she and her husband considered adopting Draheim when they took her into their rural home in the Thumb in parts of 1996 and 1997.

"She was just a very sad little girl, and there was nothing we could do," Kelzer said. "She made it impossible for us to keep her."

Draheim shoplifted from a flea market and a local grocery store before she was a teenager, ran away and "had a lot of verbal abuse for us," Kelzer said, but the family was still attached to her.

They found a therapist to talk to Draheim and brought her on a family trip to Cedar Point even after she had been returned to live in a state institution.

And after Draheim ran away from the Judson Center, she called Kelzer in the middle of night from a gas station on Woodward Avenue in Detroit, asking for help.

Kelzer picked her up and brought her back to Judson, a nonprofit organization that works to place children in foster care.

"She didn't really have anywhere to run to," Kelzer said.

An aunt of Draheim said she thinks Stephanie "just wanted an answer" from her parents: "Why did you leave me?"

"It's very sad," she said. "It's put me in tears many times."

Porn star

It's difficult to say when Draheim's involvement in adult films started, but she's credited as "Allie Sin" in 13 adult movies released in 2004, according to the online film information site Internet Movie Data Base (www.imdb.com).

- Jan. 22, 2003: Stephanie continues to be listed as absent without legal permission.

- Jan. 31, 2003: The county DHS receives a home study report from Florida's Department of Children and Families, approving Stephanie's grandparents' home as a safe place to stay.

- July 23, 2003: Shortly after her grandparents' home is deemed acceptable, they move to Michigan, and Stephanie rents a room from a friend.

- Dec. 26, 2003: Stephanie turns 18, and Florida officials stop courtesy supervision.

- May 4, 2004: The Genesee County courts' oversight of Stephanie is terminated by Judge David Newblatt, who finds she has turned 18, is "not attending school and is out of our jurisdiction."

- July 12, 2004: The state's supervision of Stephanie ends as DHS receives permission from the Michigan Children's Institute to discharge her as a ward. Although children in Stephanie's situation usually remain under MCI supervision until age 19, acting Superintendent Bruce Hoffman approves the early discharge, saying she has not followed her independent living agreement or made herself available to caseworkers.

- 2004: At age 18, Stephanie, working under the name "Allie Sin," becomes a

By January 2005, another Web site operator was selling Draheim's images, using the name "Naughty Nati" on a subscription Web site that continues today, charging customers \$24.93 for monthly access.

She's recognized among "famous people from Flint" in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, along with filmmaker Michael Moore, boxer Chris Byrd and others.

A foster parent and attorney who have known Draheim identified her for The Flint Journal as being "Allie Sin" in photos.

Corrigan's quest

Corrigan said she never realized Michigan's problem with children running away from foster care until the death of Heather Kish, who was killed while missing from foster care in 2002.

The Supreme Court justice helped set up the first special docket for runaway foster children in Wayne County and expanded it to the rest of the state soon after.

Corrigan said there is "very good cooperation with DHS" today and statistics show 75 percent of kids that go missing are eventually found.

"Would I want it to be zero (missing children)? Of course," she said. "I don't know how to get it to zero."

In September, a seminar will showcase the most successful programs from around the state for finding missing children and keeping them from running.

"Stephanie's case is very dramatic, but all these kids (who age out' of foster care) - we know more than half are homeless ... they are having children out of wedlock, they do not complete their education," Corrigan said. She called it a recipe for disaster.

popular adult film star, appearing in 13 adult movies released in 2004 alone.

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Fixing foster care

Who's responsible?

- Department of Human Services: This state agency takes over responsibility for the care of children taken from parents or guardians because of abuse or neglect. DHS caseworkers are supposed to find foster children who run away.

- Genesee County Family Court: Judges here decide when to take children from parents or guardians. Court referee Peggy Odette presides over special monthly hearings at which social workers report on progress they have made in locating runaways. She can subpoena people to testify about the whereabouts of runaways.

- Child Advocacy Team: This group of attorneys created a corporation and contracts with Genesee County to represent the interests of children in the court system. Some of their runaway clients have never met the attorneys appointed to represent them.

- Juvenile Casework Services: This Genesee Circuit Court office arranges the special court hearings for missing foster children, monitoring cases to be sure hearings are held on each child as long as they are missing.

What can be done?

- Those committed to keeping foster children off the street are still working to improve the status quo. In September, a conference for judges, court workers, state Department of Human Services workers and others will share ideas about the best ways to find children missing from foster care.

- Foster parents - particularly those willing to work with teenagers - are always needed. For information about becoming a foster parent, call the Genesee County DHS office at (810) 760-2217.

- Help and support for foster parents is available from a number of sources online, including the Foster Parent Community, www.fosterparents.com. The site is designed for sharing information with foster and adoptive families and anyone involved with at-risk children.

- There are several hot lines set up to help runaways, whether in foster care or not. The Runaway Emergency Action Center Hotline, (810) 233-8700, is operated locally. Others include the DHS-sponsored Runaway Assistance Program, (800) 292-4517, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, (800) THE-LOST.

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The missing

Despite new efforts in

the past two years to find runaways from foster care, the number of missing children has not declined locally. Here are the 19 children and young adults missing from foster care in Genesee County as of May 17:

Nicole Bovee, 17: Born Feb. 2,

1989, missing since March 14

- Shawanica Bradley, 14: Born Sept. 14, 1991, missing since May 17, 2005

- China Brown, 16: Born July 17, 1989, missing since March 30

- Dan Ray Chandanais, 15: Born Sept. 12, 1990, missing since April 13

- Nicole Chaney, 16: Born Nov. 24, 1989, missing since April 3

- Ashley Cowan, 17: Born June 3, 1989, missing since May 4

- Carrie Davis, 16: Born Aug. 1, 1989, missing since Oct. 10

- Arielle Ewing, 17: Born Jan. 31, 1989, missing since Nov. 2

- Henry Marshall, 17: Born Oct. 7, 1988, missing since Sept. 20

- Mary Murphy, 17: Born May 8, 1989, missing since May 8

- Joseph Owens, 17: Born April 1, 1989, missing since Jan. 19

- Kyle Palmateer, 18: Born June 3, 1988,

missing since April 13

- Cheyanne Perez, 13:
Born Nov. 16, 1992,
missing since March 22

- Kristina Pringle, 17:
Born Oct. 6, 1988,
missing since Jan. 6

- Ashley Sawyers, 14:
Born Oct. 26, 1991,
missing since Jan. 23

- Natasha Sawyers,
16: Born March 6, 1990,
missing since Aug. 23

- Kaosha Stephens,
16: Born Oct. 5, 1989,
missing since April 30,
2004

- Monique Tellis, 17:
Born Dec. 11, 1988,
missing since Aug. 12

- Ashley West, 16:
Born March 8, 1990,
missing since Dec. 6

Sources: State of
Michigan,
www.mfia.state.mi.us/awol/

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Everything Michigan



Natasha Sawyers' letter

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, June 25, 2006

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Dear Flint Journal Editor: A story was written on Sunday, June 4, 2006 about a girl who had been in foster care and now a porn star.

In that story myself and my sister were featured as runaways. I would like to provide you with some information. We ran away for a reason - we are not "bad" kids. ... following is our story.

My younger sister and I were introduced to the system in 2003. ... In this (foster home) situation I felt like I was the target, that everything that would go on in the house would fall back on me. I remember nights when my younger sister would stay up crying, asking me a question like, "What did she do wrong? and "Why is God doing this to her, and to us?"

I then found myself playing a huge role in her life. Basically, from that night on I became her mother.

After months and months of feeling like nothing, the only one I felt was here for me was my younger sister. I got up and decided to leave. It may not have been a good decision but at that time I was right.

About a year later I found myself in the streets switching houses, putting up with people who really didn't care for me, just weren't right, only because I felt I had nowhere else to go. At times I wanted to turn myself in and other times I just wanted it all to end.

I was told if I turn myself in I would have to go to a "boot camp" or a girl's home. I have not committed any crime and I did not want to be in a place with people who did who could harm me. I did not understand why I was going to be punished - my sister and I had suffered enough. Instead of taking the wrong road, I just stayed strong for me and my sister.

Months went by and I hadn't seen my sister and I was missing her. Some days she would call my phone just to speak with me. After (she complained of mistreatment) I told her to pack her things because I felt she should not have had to go through that because she had not done anything wrong. Yeah, siblings get into it a lot but my sister was looking out for me and I had to look out for her. ...

Ever since then we have been on the run switching homes. It is 2006 and I'm getting sick of this. Why won't they place us somewhere where we are safe, comfortable, and loved? I would go back to school, my sister wants to be in school. We want to be happy. I want to be a R.N. when I grow up. We are sick of running.

A lady I was staying with who was trying to help us told us that a child's life should be happy. That's what we deserve. Me and my sister are still together and together. ...

(My case worker) treats us as if we have committed a terrible crime. But, the only crime we have committed was being a kid. I want this nightmare to be over. I have prayed for help and I believe the newspaper article

was a blessing from God. I don't want to go to a reform school or boot camp. I want to go to Job Corps and finish school and get a great job. I want my sister safe with someone who will love and protect her.

For once, listen to what we have to say. We have been taken from a mother we love and our father is not alive. We don't want the same life as the girl who became a porn star, I want to live a good, normal life and help people.

Thank you for listening. If you want you can print and copy.

Natasha Sawyers

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Everything Michigan

THE FLINT JOURNAL

IN TOUCH IN DEPTH INVOLVED

'I want this nightmare to be over'

Sisters on the run from foster care system share thoughts in letter

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, June 25, 2006

By Ron Fonger

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GENESEE COUNTY - Before she finds a place to sleep at night, 16-year-old Natasha Sawyers stops to pray a runaway's prayer:

Let me find a way to get back to school.

Keep my little sister safe with someone who will love and protect her.

Help us live a "good, normal life and help people."

Sawyers, missing from foster care for seven months and on the run with her 14-year-old sister, Ashley, shared her hopes in a sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes frightening four-page letter sent to The Flint Journal.

The Sawyerses were among local runaway foster children profiled in a June 4 Journal report that detailed the plight of the missing kids, including one runaway who became an adult film star the same year the state Department of Human Services was responsible for her care.

Four of the 19 Genesee County runaways have been found since the article, but locating missing foster children has been a stubborn problem in Michigan. DHS oversees the care and safety of foster children who have been taken from their parents because of abuse or neglect.

Natasha Sawyers said she and Ashley fear what will happen to them if they surrender to the same child welfare system they've been hiding from.

But she said they are weary from running.

"I would like to go back to school. My sister wants to be in school. We want to be happy ...," says the letter, which has a Flint postmark. "I want this nightmare to be over."

The letter appears to have been signed by Natasha Sawyers but includes no phone number, return address or indication of exactly where she and Ashley have landed. Some details in the letter - the name of her DHS caseworker and the death of her father, for example - match facts in court documents in the Sawyerses' Genesee County Family Court case.

QUICK TAKE

15 runaways remain

Here is the most recent list of children who have run away from foster care in Genesee County and remain missing, according to the county's Juvenile Casework Services. The dates indicate how long they've been missing:

- Shawanica Bradley, 14, May 17, 2005
- Julie Butler, 17, May 25, 2006
- Dan Ray Chandanais, 15, April 13, 2006
- Ashley Cowan, 17, May 4, 2006
- Carrie Davis, 16, Oct. 11, 2005
- Arielle Ewing, 17, Nov. 2, 2005
- Paige Fox, 14, May 26, 2006

The Journal was unable to contact Sawyerses but after being informed of the letter, their attorney encouraged his clients to come out of hiding.

"If Natasha or Ashley comes in the court would give a lot of consideration to placing the girls in a less restrictive environment," said Frank Vandervort, a lawyer with the University of Michigan Law School's Child Advocacy Law Clinic.

If the girls are found by police, he said, they won't necessarily get that same consideration.

Vandervort asked the girls to call him collect at (734) 763-5000.

In her letter, Natasha Sawyers says she and her sister were mistreated in foster care and that she encouraged her sister to run away after she told her she had been beaten and left locked in a basement for two days without food or water.

"I found myself in the streets, switching houses (and) putting up with people who really didn't care for me ... (but) I felt I had no where else to go ...," she wrote.

"It is 2006, and I'm getting sick of this. Why won't they (place) us somewhere where we are safe, comfortable and loved?"

Sheryl Thompson, county DHS director, said the girls don't need to fear coming back into foster care. They won't be punished for having run away, she said, and the agency will look into their claims of abuse.

"We don't want them out on the streets. We want them to be safe," Thompson said.

DHS caseworkers and Vandervort can work out a placement that is stable, Thompson said, including possibly living with a non-relative who is responsible and willing to help.

DHS removed the girls from their mother, Lori L. Manuel, after the state petitioned Family Court in late 2004. The department's contact with the family goes back earlier, however, according to court records.

Documents filed by caseworkers say reasonable efforts were made to keep the family together but failed because of "chronic incidents of neglect and the risk of (Manuel's) repeated disappearances."

Natasha has been reported as missing from foster care since November -about one year after Judge Duncan Beagle approved placing both girls with a relative Nov. 28, 2004. Her sister ran away from foster care in January.

The Journal could not reach Manuel or an aunt of the girls.

Natasha said she "took (on) the big sister-motherly role" and told Ashley to pack her things and join her to get her out of a bad foster placement.

"I remember nights when my younger sister would stay up crying, asking ... what did she do wrong, and why is God doing this? ...," the letter says.

Natasha said she fears being sent to a boot camp or girls home if she surrenders to social workers, but that's not what would happen, according to Family Court Referee Peggy Odette.

Attorneys appointed to represent children have become much more vigilant at working with runaways to find a placement that will keep them from running again, Odette said.

She said The Journal's June 4 article resulted in tips from readers about the whereabouts of some runaway children.

● Henry Marshall,
17, Sept. 20, 2005

● Joseph Owens,
17, Jan. 19, 2006

● Cheyanne Perez,
13, April 3, 2006

● Kristina Pringle,
17, Jan. 6, 2006

● Ashley Sawyers,
14, Jan. 23, 2006

● Natasha Sawyers,
16, Nov. 16, 2005

● Monique Tellis,
17, June 2, 2006

● Ashley West, 16,
July 7, 2005



Everything Michigan



An open letter to Natasha Sawyers

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, July 02, 2006

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

June 30, 2006

Dear Ms. Sawyers,

In your recent letter to The Flint Journal about your life as a runaway from foster care, you wrote, "For once, listen to what we have to say." I want you to know that the Genesee County Family Division judges, referees and many others are listening. I am also hoping that you see this letter as I know of no other way to reach you and others like you who are on the run.

You are right - you and your sister, Ashley, deserve to be safe. You deserve to finish school, to live with people who will care for you, to enjoy life and pursue your dreams. That's why I'm appealing to you and Ashley: Please, for your own sakes, stop running. Come in from the streets.

You have both suffered a great deal. Perhaps that is why life on the streets, as bad as it is, seems like an option. However, I don't have to tell you that living on the streets is not a "good, normal life." You know that - you called it a "nightmare." And you're right, Ms. Sawyers. It's no life for you and sister. It's no life for anyone.

We can do better for you. That's why I hope that you will read this letter - and that you and your sister will come in from the streets. That is why I have asked your lawyer to please tell you if you call her, and why

I am telling you now: You and your sister will not be punished for turning yourselves in. You will not be sent to "boot camp" or reform school. There are people who want to help you,

people who have volunteered to take you and your sister into their homes. We will work with you to find a place where you can live the "good, normal life" you want for yourself and your sister.

You can call your attorney, Theresa Holifield, collect at (810) 908-0537. You can call the court staff collect at (810) 257-3540 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and ask for Juvenile Casework Supervisors Remus Holbrook and Patrice Steihl. If you prefer, come to the Genesee County Courthouse at 900 S. Saginaw St. in downtown Flint anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and check in with my staff.

We're listening, Ms. Sawyers. We hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Duncan M. Beagle,

Circuit Judge



Everything Michigan

THE FLINT JOURNAL

INTOUCH INDEPTH INVOLVED

Judge to sisters: Come back

Runaways from foster care promised good home, return to school

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, July 02, 2006

By Ron Fonger

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FLINT - If two runaway foster children want a safe home and a chance to return to school, Genesee County Family Court Judge Duncan M. Beagle promises - in writing - to make it happen.

In an open letter to Natasha Sawyers, 16, and Ashley Sawyers, 14, Beagle writes that the sisters who fled from foster homes months ago won't be punished for running away. He urges them to let others help get their lives on track. The letter appears in full on page XX.

"There are people who want to help you, people who have volunteered to take you and your sister into their homes," it says. "We will work with you to find a place where you can live the good, normal life you want for yourself and your sister."

The letter responds to one from Natasha Sawyers to The Flint Journal. In her letter, parts of which were published last Sunday, Natasha explains why she and her sister ran away from foster homes. They are two of 15 children from the county who currently are missing from the state's foster care system.

Beagle, who removed the girls from their mother's custody in 2004, said he hopes they see his letter. The girls' father is deceased.

"They connected with you. Somebody ... is reading your paper," Beagle said of his reason for writing the open letter - an unusually personal step.

Like Beagle, Martha Yates, a disabled 65-year-old Burton resident, was moved when she read Natasha's account of life on the street and her desire to stop running and return to school.

Although the girls have committed no crime, police are authorized to pick them up if they are found because they are missing from their court-ordered placements without permission.

Yates lives on a fixed income but offered to contribute money to help the sisters start anew.

"I would put up the first \$50 to help," she said. "At least it would put them each in a new pair of shoes."

The Journal first wrote about the sisters and the plight of other foster care runaways in a June 4 story that detailed the life of a Flint foster child who moved to Florida and became an adult film star in the same year

QUICK TAKE

"You deserve to finish school, to live with people who will care for you, to enjoy life and pursue your dreams. That's why I'm appealing to you and Ashley: Please, for your own sakes, stop running. Come in from the streets."

- Genesee County Family Court Judge Duncan M. Beagle in an open letter

to foster care runaways

Natasha and Ashley Sawyers

Read the entire letter on page A2.

the state Department of Human Services was responsible for her care.

Journal readers called in tips after that story, and four of the county's 19 runaways have been found.

Finding the children is critical because they are susceptible to predators and can be desperate for a place to stay.

"Girls get taken advantage of more," said county Casework Supervisor Remus Holbrook. "That's one of the biggest issues we are confronted with when they run."

Holbrook said the state has a duty to keep looking for children who run away after they are placed in foster care.

"The state has to act as if it were the parent until these kids are adopted out or another placement is in order," he said.

Children are placed in foster care not because they did anything wrong but because their parent or guardian abused or neglected them.

Beagle removed the Sawyerses from their mother, Lori L. Manuel, after the state petitioned family court in late 2004 because of Manuel's "chronic incidents of neglect and the risk of (Manuel's) repeated disappearances."

Natasha was reported missing from foster care in November. Her sister ran away from foster care in January.

In her letter, Natasha claims she and her sister were mistreated in foster care, an allegation the state Department of Human Services has agreed to investigate.

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Everything Michigan

THE FLINT JOURNAL

IN TOUCH IN DEPTH INVOLVED

'Running no more,' sisters find a home

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, July 04, 2006

By Ron Fonger

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FLINT - Two Flint sisters who ran away from foster care are off the streets, placed with a family they know in a home where they want to stay.

Natasha Sawyers, 16, whose poignant letter to The Flint Journal about life as a runaway was published June 25, and her sister, Ashley, 14, were placed with a friend's family after a quickly arranged hearing Friday in Genesee Circuit Court's family division.

"I (haven't) been to school for almost two years so I'm excited" about going back, said Natasha Sawyers, who wants to find a summer job, earn her diploma, "go to college and be a (registered nurse).

"I hope everything works out," she said. "We're not running no more."

The girls came out of hiding the same day Family Court Judge Duncan M. Beagle penned an unusual open letter to them, promising them placement in a good home, a chance to return to school, and no punishment for having run away.

Beagle's letter appeared in Sunday's Journal, but before that, caseworkers for the state Department of Human Services already were clearing the way for their return, working with Jatasha L. Haralson, who has taken them into her home on Flint's west side.

"The bottom line is we are glad they are safe and healthy," Beagle said.

The girls seemed right at home on Monday, giggling, getting their new room in order and planning a party to celebrate a fresh start after having been on the run together since late January.

They are guarded about what this year has been like and Ashley is quiet, letting her older sister speak for the pair.

Haralson, who has known the girls since they were in elementary school, said she was allowed to bring the sisters home on Friday after first approaching DHS about it two months ago.

At first rejected because she wasn't related and wasn't a foster parent, Haralson said DHS called again just last week - after Natasha's letter

QUICK TAKE

Still missing

Natasha and Ashley Sawyers are no longer missing from foster care, but 13 others from Genesee County

are, according to the most recent listing by the county's Juvenile Casework Services program. The state

Department of Human Services asks those with information about the children to call its toll free tip line

at 1-866-729-0026.

Shawanica Bradley, 14

Julie Butler, 17

Dan Ray Chandanais, 15

Ashley Cowan, 17

Carrie Davis, 16

Arielle Ewing, 17

was published - and told her she could take in the girls under "fictive kin" rules.

The rules allow for a nonfamily member to care for a child even though they are unrelated when they have an emotionally significant bond.

"These girls are wonderful," she said, and both have been friends of her own daughter since childhood. "I'm sure it's going to be a challenge but it's going to be worth it."

Haralson works as a project specialist for the Genesee Intermediate School District and has three children of her own. She is applying to become the legal guardian of a cousin to the Sawyers and her 11-month-old baby as well.

The Sawyers were taken from their mother, Lori L. Manuel, after the state petitioned family court in late 2004 because of what it called Manuel's "chronic incidents of neglect."

Their father deceased, the girls stayed

with family members with the blessing of DHS initially, but Natasha ran when she

found out she was about to be placed with a foster family she didn't know in the Lansing area.

Months after she ran away, Natasha came back for Ashley when she suspected she was being mistreated - an allegation DHS has said it is investigating.

The sisters said they survived by moving and staying with people they knew who agreed to give them a hand.

"We weren't out in the streets. We weren't no bums," said Natasha, who said she still knows how to contact her mother and expects to have a relationship with her when she becomes an adult.

The girls said little about where they have been, but don't recommend running to others.

"It's over with for now so I ain't thinking about it," Natasha said.

Remus Holbrook, director of juvenile casework services for Genesee County Circuit Court, said he hopes the placement works for the girls.

"We're trying to set up a situation to put them in - a secure, safe placement," Holbrook said. "We don't want them out there on the street. That's not good for them or for the community."

Karen Stock, director of communications for DHS, would not comment on specifics of the case but said the state wants to find stable placements for all children who have run away from foster care.

The state's Web site listed more than 150 children as missing from the foster care system Monday.

The Sawyers' decision to report to court drops the list of children missing from foster care in the county to 13 after having been at 19 just last month.

Officials have said tips about the whereabouts of those runaways have been on the rise since a series of stories, including Natasha's letter, have appeared in The Journal.

Natasha said runaways are afraid to

stop running because they don't know where they might be placed. She felt no one in the system listened to her in the past but said she's already decided she made the right decision.

Paige Fox, 14

Henry Marshall, 17

Joseph Owens, 17

Cheyenne Perez, 13

Kristina Pringle, 17

Monique Tellis, 17

Ashley West, 16

"I would tell them to turn themselves in," she said to the remaining runaways. "That's the best thing to do."

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Everything Michigan



Foster care save Sisters in good hands now, but all children owed more

FLINT JOURNAL EDITORIAL

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, July 06, 2006

The news had a lot of us sighing in relief. Even as Family Court Judge Duncan M. Beagle was openly encouraging two Flint sisters to come in via a letter in The Flint Journal, caseworkers with the Department of Human Services were working to have the pair placed in the home of a family friend.

Natasha Sawyers, 16, and her sister, Ashley, 14, are living in a home on Flint's west side now, apparently happy and healthy despite what had to have been a stressful time hiding from authorities. The pair was featured in a June 4 Flint Journal story about foster care runaways in Genesee County.

However, in celebrating their returns, we must not forget other foster care children still on the run. They number more than 150 in Michigan, and every day they're not found puts them at risk for emotional and physical harm. It also deprives them of the safe childhoods and educations that are their right.

When youngsters are removed from their parents' custody, the state takes on the awesome responsibility of seeing to their care. That makes it imperative that caseworkers, foster parents, teachers, school officials and others do their jobs effectively.

That's not always happening, as Natasha Sawyers made clear in a poignant letter to The Journal last month. Natasha and Ashley were removed from their mother's care in late 2004, and authorities are investigating whether Ashley was abused in a foster home.

In her letter to The Journal, Natasha wrote: "It is 2006, and I'm getting sick of this. Why won't they (place) us somewhere where we are safe, comfortable and loved?"

Whatever the reason for their leaving foster care, the fact that it happened at all is unacceptable. While on the run, living with people who may not have had their best interests at heart, they missed months - in Natasha's case, nearly two years - of school.

The girls now have high hopes for a bright future and we wish them well. But as a society, we must ask: How can vulnerable children become law-abiding and self-supporting adults, when we do so poor a job of nurturing them?

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Amber Alert Canceled For Local Boy

POSTED: 7:27 pm EDT July 20, 2006

An Amber Alert for a 4-year-old boy in Detroit has been canceled. Police said the boy's 18-year-old mother took him because she was just told she was losing custody of him. She returned the boy sometime overnight. The boy is now in the custody of child protective services.

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Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children
April 30, 2004 – PT 2004.08

APPENDIX C

State of Illinois
Department of Children and Family Services

MISSING CHILD DE-BRIEFING FORM

Child Name: _____ Child I.D. _____

Caseworker Name: _____ Caseworker ID: _____

Type of Absence: ABD ☐ WUK ☐ WCC ☐ Current LIVAR _____

Dates Missing: From _____ to _____ Date of De-Briefing: _____

Location of De-Briefing: _____

The child's caseworker should ask the child the following questions. Record the child's answers in the space provided, use the back of the form if necessary.

1) Why did you leave your previous placement?

2) Did anyone encourage you to leave?

3) Did you tell anyone you were leaving before you left? If so, who did you tell?

4) How much money did you have with you when you left?

5) What is the first thing you did after you left?

6) Where did you go?

7) If you were planning to go to a specific place, did you go there?

8) With whom did you stay while you were gone?

Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children

April 30, 2004 – PT 2004.08

- 9) How did you survive (i.e. Where did you sleep? Where did you get food? How did you get money?)

- 10) Did you get sick or were you physically hurt or injured while you were gone? _____

a) If so, describe your illness or how and where you were hurt/injured.

b) Did you get medical care anywhere? If so, what care did you get and from where did you get medical care?

- 11) Were you sexually active while you were away? _____

a) If so, describe the sexual activity (i.e. when, with whom, what activity, forced or voluntary, etc.?)

b) Did the sexual activity hurt you in any way?

c) For females, do you think you may be pregnant?

Note: Any child who reports having engaged in sexual activity must be examined by a doctor within 24 hours of being located. Also, if a child reports being forced to engage in sexual activity, the caseworker must make a report of the assault to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- 12) Why (or under what circumstances, e.g. police picked the child up) did you return?

- 13) Have you ever runaway before? If so, when and why?

- 14) What was the best thing about being away?

- 15) What the worst thing about being away?

Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children

April 30, 2004 – PT 2004.08

16) Do you think you might runaway again in the future?

a) If so, why would you run away again?

b) What can I (caseworker) or your caregiver do to help you make a decision to not runaway in the future?

17) Is there anything I can do for you right now to make you feel safe so you won't runaway again?

18) If the ward had her/his child with them while missing:

a) How did you meet your child's needs for food, diapers, milk, etc, while you were gone?

b) Did your child stay with you all the time you were gone? If not, who cared for your child?

c) Who watched your child when you needed a break?

d) Did your child need to see a doctor or did the child see a doctor while you were gone? If so, why?

e) Does your child need any medical care now?

Caseworker's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Approval

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date of Approval: _____

Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children
April 30, 2004 – PT 2004.08

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Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

September 8, 2006

**Michigan Hall of Justice Conference Center
Lansing, Michigan**

County Panels Highlighting Current And Innovative AWOLP Practices

Faculty:

Kent County Panel

This program is funded by a federal Children's Justice Act grant to the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice administered through the Michigan Department of Human Services, under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Administration of Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA 93.643, being section 107(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) as amended (42 USC 5101 *et seq.*); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended (42 USC 10601 *et seq.*) In addition, this is a joint project of the State Court Administrative Office and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, chaired by the Honorable Elizabeth A. Weaver, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

**KENT COUNTY (17TH CIRCUIT COURT) LIST
Children Absent Without Legal Permission (AWOLP)**

7-25-06

NAME	DOB	LEGAL STATUS/JUDGE	LAST HEARING	NEXT HEARING	AWOLP DATE	RESPONSE	SUSPECTED WHEREABOUTS	AGENCY & WORKER ASSIGNED	ATTORNEY ASSIGNED
Patrice	11-15-87	TW - Pestka	5-10-06	8-9-06	4-6-06	P/up order on LEIN	May be w/friends in Muskegon	DHS - Elsie Ford	Penny Minninnick
Nathan	07-31-88	TW - Carpenter	6-28-06	09-20-06	5-11-06	P/up order on LEIN	Call's M.I.C.W. & Kids First Staff	M.I.C.W. - Jennifer Alban	Frederick Johnson
Asia	8-24-89	TW - Feeney	5-8-06	8-8-06	6-18-06	P/up order on LEIN	Might be at Mother's house	BCS - Julie Kammeraad	Mary Benedict
Jose	07-25-00	PW - Gardner	5-9-06	8-15-06	6-27-01	P/up order on LEIN	Possibly Mexico or GR w/father-Mom abducted	DHS-Tracey Huff	Dennis Carlson
Kayla	10-11-88	TW - Carpenter	6-28-06	9-21-06	5-31-06	P/up order on LEIN	Recently told Wendy she will come back soon	DHS - Wendy Wheeler	Charles Covello
Stephanie	1-4-03	TW - Feeney	5-17-06	8-16-06	3-8-06	P/up order on LEIN	Kidnapped by Mother	DHS - Wendy Wheeler	Judy Ostrander
Marifer	5-8-04	TW - Feeney	5-17-06	8-16-06	3-8-06	P/up order on LEIN	Kidnapped by Mother	DHS - Wendy Wheeler	Judy Ostrander
Javonte C.	9-9-90	PW - Pestka	5-3-06	8-8-06	5-24-06	P/up order on	May be w/relatives in Minnesota	BCS - Rick Wolters	Joanee Schreyes
Saundria	12-4-05	TW - Pestka	6-29-06	9-28-06	4-3-06	P/up order on LEIN	Mother took out of state	DAB - Kari VanderBee	James Owens
Priscilla	3-21-92	TW - Zemaitis	6-27-06	9-20-06	7-1-06	P/up order on LEIN	Atty. got call from Aunt saying sisters are not together but are	LSS - Angela Henry	Leigh Jennings
Samantha	3-29-91	TW - Zemaitis	6-27-06	9-20-06	7-1-06	P/up order on LEIN	probably staying w/friends and are in contact with each other.	LSS - Angela Henry	Leigh Jennings

CHILDREN ABSENT WITHOUT LEGAL PERMISSION

Private Agency Procedures

When a Child goes AWOL:

These are the procedures private agency case managers should follow when a child goes AWOL. Foster parents should be instructed by the agencies regarding their specific responsibilities.

- Immediately (within 1 hour) foster parents/kinship caregivers, parents and residential facility staff must notify law enforcement agencies and their supervising agency when the ward under their care has failed to return at the expected time.
- Immediately (within 1 hour) of notification, the supervising agency will file a missing person report with the local law enforcement.
- Immediately (within 1 hour) of notification, the supervising agency will notify the FIA Children's Services Monitoring Specialist, or designee, of the child's AWOL status.
- Within 24 hours of notification, the supervising agency will:
 - ◆ Notify the court of jurisdiction
 - ◆ Notify the parents (if appropriate)
- Within 24 hours/1 business day, the supervising agency of notification will:
 - ◆ Document action taken to find the child
 - ◆ Notify the FIA monitoring worker of any additional information
 - ◆ Present a copy of the KC-3 Petition—Request to Place in Temporary Custody and a copy of the Kent County Law Enforcement Entry for Missing Endangered Juveniles to the Case Management Unit at Family Court. (Case Management will write a court order with a Judge's signature and forward the order, along with the Kent County Law Enforcement Entry for Missing Endangered Juveniles to the appropriate police agency, for LEIN entry.)
 - ◆ Forward a copy of the above forms and the child's current photo to the FIA monitor with an additional copy to Karen Huston.
- Within 24 hours /1 business day after notification, the FIA Children's Services Monitoring Worker or designee will:
 - ◆ Update the information in SWSS FAJ (see above)
 - ◆ Confirm that child has been entered on LEIN and document in case.
 - ◆ Provide any information needed by the centralized unit for the Child Locator Web Site

- Within 48 hours/2 business days of notification, the supervising agency must commence a diligent search for the child by the following action:
 - ◆ Review case record to identify information on the potential location of child/youth (family members, fictive kin, friends, known associates, churches, neighborhood centers)
 - ◆ Contact the school that the child last attended
 - ◆ Verify that the child is not in attendance
 - ◆ Determine if there are friends/teachers of the child that may have information
 - ◆ Contact the local school district office(s) to determine if child has enrolled in new school
 - ◆ Review medical passport and medical records in case file
 - ◆ Determine if there are outstanding medical needs and contact physician
 - ◆ Determine if there are medication needs and contact pharmacy
 - ◆ Document information in agency file
 - ◆ Forward any new results of contacts to the court, law enforcement and FIA monitoring worker
- Within 48 hours/2 business days of notification, the FIA Children's Services Monitoring Worker or designee must commence a diligent search for the child by the following action:
 - ◆ Complete automated systems checks to search for child or known family members (CIMS/ASSIST, Secretary of State, LEIN)
 - ◆ Review any additional FIA case records/SWSS records to identify information on the potential location of child/youth (family members, fictive kin, friends, known associates, churches, neighborhood centers)
 - ◆ Forward any new information to the court, law enforcement and supervising agency
- At a minimum, the supervising agency and the FIA monitoring worker will repeat a diligent search during every reporting period. The workers will document all efforts to locate a child and any child initiated contacts in the case record, updated service plan and court reports. Additional requirements for younger children will be addressed in a future communication.
- The foster care, juvenile justice or adoption worker will continue to notify law enforcement of any further new information.

At review hearings, the Family Court Judge will review the diligent search efforts that were made.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

To: All Child Welfare Staff

Date: 3-19-03

From: Savator Selden-Johnson &
Sandy Harmon

Subject: Procedures for Placing a Child on LEIN

The LEIN administrator's office in Lansing has ordered that LEIN entries are to be made only by Law Enforcement Agencies. In Kent County, Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Grandville, Walker, Rockford and KCSD do their own LEIN entry. East Grand Rapids, Cedar Springs, and Kentwood do their own during normal business hours, but use Kent County Sheriff Department evenings and weekends. Walker does it for Lowell and Rockford does it for Sparta.

The following are the steps when a child is AWOLP:

- 1) The case manager (CPS, FC or private agency FC) fills out the attached Kent County Law Enforcement Entry for Missing Endangered Juveniles and the KC-3 Petition – Request to Place in Temporary Custody.
- 2) Present these forms to the case management unit at Family Court.
- 3) Case management will type up a Court Order and obtain a judge's signature on the order.
- 4) Case Management will then fax the Court Order and the Kent County Law Enforcement Entry for Missing Endangered Juveniles to the appropriate police agency. (note: the residence of the child's parent, who last had physical custody, determines which police agency). The agency workers should call the police agency to let them know a fax is coming.

When an AWOLP child is found:

- 1) **Immediately, fax the Law Enforcement Entry for Missing Endangered Juveniles with the cancellation notice filled out to the same police agency and the court.**

Note: The court pick-up order will have an expiration date. If the child is still AWOLP, the order must be renewed.

Grand Rapids (Fax-456-3723) ☐
 (Phone-456-3320) ☐
 KCSD (Fax-451-2912) ☐
 (Phone-336-3131) ☐
 Cedar Springs (Fax-696-0202) ☐
 (Phone-696-1311) ☐
 East Grand Rapids (Fax 940-4829) ☐
 (Phone-949-7010) ☐
 Grandville (Fax-538-7553) ☐
 (Phone-538-6110) ☐
 Kentwood (Fax-698-6460) ☐
 (Phone-698-6580) ☐

Lowell (Fax-897-4074) ☐
 (Phone 897-7123) ☐
 Rockford (Fax-866-7181) ☐
 (Phone 866-9557) ☐
 Sparta (Fax-887-7681) ☐
 (Phone-877-8716) ☐
 Walker (Fax 791-6811) ☐
 (Phone-453-5441) ☐
 Wyoming (Fax-530-7306) ☐
 (Phone-530-7304) ☐

KENT COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT Entry For Missing Endangered Juveniles

ORI: _____ (L.E. entry) OPR: _____ (L.E. entry)

NAME: _____ / _____ / _____ DOB: _____
 Last First Middle

RACE: _____ SEX: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____ HAIR: _____ EYES: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DRIVER'S LICENSE #: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY #: _____

CHILD BELIEVED WITH: _____ / _____ / _____
 (TO BE ENTERED AS ALIAS): Last First Middle

DOB: _____ RACE: _____ SEX: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____ / _____ / _____
 Last First Middle

DOB: _____ RACE: _____ SEX: _____

OCA: _____ (Court case number)—required field DATE OF LAST CONTACT: _____

REMARKS: _____

AGENCY OF PLACEMENT: _____ CASE WORKER NAME: _____

24-HOUR CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____

CANCELLATION NOTICE

DATE OF CANCELLATION: _____

REASON FOR CANCELLATION: _____

AUTHORITY: _____

DATE REMOVED FROM LEIN: _____ OPR: _____

Note: Cancellation needs to be faxed to L.E. and the Court.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
FAMILY DIVISION
KENT COUNTY

1. In the matter of: _____
[Name(s), Alias(es), DOB]
2. The home conditions (specified below) of the above-named child(ren) make immediate removal necessary. Protective custody is necessary because custody of the child(ren) with a parent, guardian, or custodian presents a substantial risk of harm to the child(ren)'s life, physical health, or mental well being and no provision of service or other arrangement except removal of the child(ren) is reasonably available to adequately safeguard the child(ren) from such risk.
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cruelty | <input type="checkbox"/> Depravity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drunkenness | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Neglect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abandonment | <input type="checkbox"/> Runaway from Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Runaway from Placement/
Violation of Court Order | <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial Risk of Harm to Mental
Well Being |
3. Record details of the emergency situation in the space below.

4. Child(ren)'s current whereabouts: _____
5. Other Court with prior/continuing jurisdiction: _____
6. I declare that this complaint has been examined by me and that its contents are true to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.

Complainant's Signature

Date

Agency

Print/Type Name

Address

Telephone Number

City, State, Zip

Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement Without Legal Permission (AWOLP): A Best Practices Forum

September 8, 2006

**Michigan Hall of Justice Conference Center
Lansing, Michigan**

County Panels Highlighting Current And Innovative AWOLP Practices

Faculty:

Saginaw County Panel

This program is funded by a federal Children's Justice Act grant to the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice administered through the Michigan Department of Human Services, under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Administration of Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, CFDA 93.643, being section 107(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) as amended (42 USC 5101 *et seq.*); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended (42 USC 10601 *et seq.*) In addition, this is a joint project of the State Court Administrative Office and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, chaired by the Honorable Elizabeth A. Weaver, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family
Independence
Agency**

Memo

Saginaw

Saginaw, Mi. 48605
www.mfia.state.mi.us

Tel: 989 758 1833
Fax: 758 1848

To: Antoinette Prabucki, CFC Acting Supervisor

Date: January 17, 2003

From: Roger Soule, Services Section Manager
Saginaw County FIA

Subject: **AWOLP Coordinator Responsibilities**

This memo is about reporting missing children. Any child under the care and supervision of the FIA **missing** from their placement for more than one (1) hour must be reported to FIA as missing. The following steps are to be taken by the AWOLP Coordinator immediately to locate a missing child and to notify appropriate people.

- **Assure CFC staff have followed the Local Office Protocol: Report Missing Children (Dated 01-06-2003)**
- Upon CFC worker's completion of the **FIA-3198A** Unauthorized Leave Report to Court/Law Enforcement and Missing Person Report, five copies are to be provided to the AWOLP Coordinator.
- The AWOLP Coordinator is to e-mail the following individuals with the AWOL minor's name, DOB, case number, court file number, date and time missing and caseworker load number:

fharrison@saginawcounty.com

rlamping@saginawcounty.com

dcable@saginawcounty.com

gonzaless@michigan.gov

souler@michigan.gov

barstr@michigan.gov

- The AWOLP Coordinator is to fax a copy of the **FIA-3198A** Unauthorized Leave Report to Court/Law Enforcement and Missing Person Report, to **Ramona Lamping at the Saginaw County Circuit Court-Family Division at (989) 799-2171 using the attached cover sheet.**
- **Hard copies** of the **FIA-3198A**, Unauthorized Leave Report to Court/Law Enforcement and Missing Person Report are to be sent to the following individuals:

~~Saginaw County Circuit Court-Family Division
Inter-office to L. Gonzales, Director *Randy*
Inter-office mail to R. Soule, CFC Program Manager~~



JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
LANSING



DOUGLAS E. HOWARD
DIRECTOR

December 10, 2002

Dear Agency Director:

Recent events have heightened our concern about children who are absent without legal permission. The Family Independence Agency (FIA) has initiated many changes in policies and procedures to help locate and return these children to a court approved placement.

This letter serves to notify all private agencies of the new requirements relative to youth that are absent without legal permission (AWOLP). The following changes apply to any child currently active in Foster Care, or Juvenile Justice (FAJ) Programs. Compliance with this requirement applies to all Child Placing Agencies, Child Care Institutions and Shelter Care.

When a child is AWOLP, all Purchase of Service Agencies must implement the following:

- Immediately (within 1 hour), the foster parents/kinship caregivers, parents and residential facility staff must notify law enforcement agencies and their supervising agency when the ward under their care has failed to return at the expected time.
- Immediately (within 1 hour) of notification the supervising agency will file a missing person report with the local law enforcement. Verbal notification shall be followed by written notification.
- Immediately (within 1 hour) of notification, the supervising agency will notify the FIA Children's Services Monitoring Specialist, or designee, of the child's AWOL status. Verbal notification shall be followed by written notification.
- Within 24 hours of notification, the supervising agency will:
 - ◆ Notify the court of jurisdiction (in accordance with established local court/FIA policy)
 - ◆ Notify the parents (if appropriate).
- Within 24 hours/1 business day, the supervising agency will:
 - ◆ Document action taken to find the child
 - ◆ Notify the FIA Monitoring Worker, both verbally and in writing, of any additional information
 - ◆ Forward a copy of the Unauthorized Leave Notification (FIA 3198) to the local law enforcement to ensure that the child/youth is entered on LEIN as MISSING and ENDANGERED
 - ◆ Forward a copy of the FIA 3198 to the court
 - ◆ Forward a copy of the FIA 3198 and the child's current photo to the FIA worker.
- Within 24 hours/ 1 business day of receipt of the FIA 3198, the FIA Children's Services Monitoring Worker or designee will:
 - ◆ Update the information in SWSS FAJ (see above)
 - ◆ Confirm that child has been entered on LEIN and document in case
 - ◆ Provide any information needed by the centralized unit for the Child Locator Web Site.

Inter-office mail to R. Barst, CPS Program Manager

- The **AWOLP Coordinator** is to keep a copy of all reports submitted by staff and also keep individual files on the missing children.
- The **AWOLP Coordinator** will receive the turnaround copy of the Cover sheet for AWOLP notification sent to the court signed by Ramona Lamping indicating the court received sent materials. A copy of this signed document is to be given to the case worker.
- The **AWOLP Coordinator** is the contact person for the court to follow up on any information regarding a missing child. In turn, the **AWOLP Coordinator** coordinates contact with the court for staff on all identified, known missing children.
- Upon an AWOLP ward being located, the CFC worker is to follow the protocol as outlined in the Local Office Protocol: Reporting Missing Children (dated 01-06-2003); generating an **FIA-3198B**. **Five copies of the FIA-3198B are to be provided to the AWOLP Coordinator.**
- The AWOLP Coordinator is to **e-mail** the following individuals with the AWOL minor's name, DOB, case number, court file number and date located/found:

fharrison@saginawcounty.com
rlamping@saginawcounty.com
dcable@saginawcounty.com
gonzalessl@michigan.gov
souler@michigan.gov
barstr@michigan.gov

- The AWOLP Coordinator is to **fax** a copy of the **FIA-3198B** to **Ramona Lamping at the Saginaw County Circuit Court-Family Division at (989) 799-2171** using the attached cover sheet.
- **Hard copies of the FIA-3198B** are to be **sent** to the following individuals:

Saginaw County Circuit Court-Family Division
Inter-office to L. Gonzales
Inter-office mail to R. Soule
Inter-office mail to R. Barst

The fifth copy is to be kept by the **AWOLP Coordinator**

Presently the **AWOLP Coordinator** is Antoinette Prabucki. Mary Jo Kniebbe is the back-up when Mrs. Prabucki is not in the office.

CC: Longino C. Gonzales, Director
Randy Barst, Services Section Manager
Foster Care Supervisors
CPS Supervisors
Cathy Myers, Adele Nowlen, David Young, Rick Latinen
AWOLP Coordinator Responsibilities

Saginaw Family Independence Agency
COVER SHEET FOR AWOLP NOTIFICATION TO COURT

Youth Missing: _____ Age of Youth _____ Date Missing: _____
If a sibling group is absent from placement put their names here
Youth Missing: _____ Age of Youth _____ Date Missing: _____
Youth Missing: _____ Age of Youth _____ Date Missing: _____
Youth Missing: _____ Age of Youth _____ Date Missing: _____
Youth Missing: _____ Age of Youth _____ Date Missing: _____

Case Worker: _____ Phone # _____

Steps Taken By Worker

[NOTE: the steps indicated below are not all the required steps regarding a youth who is AWOLP. This is only the initial requirements necessary for timely informing the court of the missing child(ren)]

- ☐ SWSS FAJ information changed/updated and Living Arrangement coded 20
- ☐ FIA-3198A Completed and
 - ☐ Attached to this form for sending to the court
- ☐ FIA-3198A and this cover sheet given to Toni Prabucki, FC Supervisor, on _____

FC Supervisor Responsibility

- ☐ Information on AWOLP Emailed to Judge Harrison; Dave Cable, and Mona Lamping
- ☐ FIA-3198A and cover sheet sent to court on _____

Supervisor's Signature

Date

10th Circuit Court – Family Division

- ☐ Packet received from FIA and was complete. Cover Sheet returned to FIA Supervisor
- ☐ Packet received from FIA, but was incomplete. Supervisor called for missing information.
Status Conference scheduled for: _____ (within 7 days of AWOLP notice)

Court Clerk's Signature

Date

Saginaw FIA Supervisor Response on AWOLP youth

- ☐ Youth found. FIA-3198 B attached and sent to court on _____
- ☐ Youth still missing. Court hearing will be requested.
- ☐ Youth still missing. Court hearing is not considered necessary.

UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE NOTIFICATION

Michigan Department of Human Services

The DHS-3198 is to be attached to the JC-05 (petition), if filed.
 The local DHS office is to be notified immediately of the truancy, AWOL, escape.
 After working hours, weekends and holidays:
 • Notify the local office by calling the 24-hour CPS telephone number.

The DHS-3198 is to be faxed or mailed to the local DHS office. If the child/youth is a permanent ward, a copy of the DHS-3198 is to be sent to the MCI superintendent. When the child/youth is found/apprehended, notify all involved parties.

1. Child/Youth Status:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Ward, MCI PA 220
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delinquent Ward, PA 150
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dual Ward, PA 220 and PA 150
<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary Court Ward, PA 224

SECTION I - To Be Completed by Reporting Persons:

2. Child/Youth Name (Last, First, Middle)		3. Date of Birth		4. Age	
5. DHS Case Number		6. Court File Number		7. Date Youth Left Placement	
8. Time Youth Left Placement		9. Other Identifying Feature (Scars, Clothing, Etc.)		10. Hair Color	
11. Eye Color		12. Height		13. Weight	
14. Race/Ethnic/Gender Information		15. Risk Assessment (If any, notify law enforcement and explain below:)			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> M F </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>		<input type="checkbox"/> Is serious risk to community/self <input type="checkbox"/> Is 11 years of age or younger <input type="checkbox"/> Is an escapee, PA 150 committed to high security setting <input type="checkbox"/> Foul play is suspected 			
16. Youth May Have Escaped To:		17. Name and Relationship		18. Phone Number	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Home <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain		19. Address		20. City	
21. State		22. Zip Code		23. Parent's/Guardian's Name	
24. Phone Number		25. Date Notified of Escape		26. Parent/Guardian Complete Address	
27. City		28. State		29. Zip Code	
30. Name of Placement Agency (Youth Missing From)		31. Agency Phone Number		32. Placement Agency Worker's Name	
33. Date DHS Contacted		34. Time DHS Contacted		35. Date Notification Mailed	
36. Name of Reporting Person		37. Signature			

SECTION II - To Be Completed by DHS Worker:

38. Dates and Actions Taken To Locate Missing Youth:					
39. DHS Worker Name					
40. DHS Worker Phone Number					
41. Name of Law Enforcement Agency Notified					
42. Date Law Enforcement Notified					
43. Time Law Enforcement Notified					
44. Police Report Number					
45. Police Teletype Number					
46. Ward Entered On Lien?					
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes					
47. Lien Code Used					
<input type="checkbox"/> 8100 <input type="checkbox"/> 0029					
48. All involved parties have been notified that youth was found					
49. Apprehension Date					
50. Current Placement					

AUTHORITY: P.A. 150 of 1974 as amended 803.306 COMPLETION: Mandatory PENALTY: Child/Youth a name will not appear on the lien.	Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.
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Distribution: Law Enforcement, DSW Court, Parent/Guardian, Placement Agency

UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE NOTIFICATION Michigan Department of Human Services

The DHS-3198 is to be attached to the JC-05 (petition), if filed.
The local DHS office is to be notified immediately of the truancy, AWOL, escape.

After working hours, weekends and holidays:

- Notify the local office by calling the 24-hour CPS telephone number.

The DHS-3198 is to be faxed or mailed to the local DHS office. If the child/youth is a permanent ward, a copy of the DHS-3198 is to be sent to the MCI superintendent. When the child/youth is found/apprehended, notify all involved parties.

1. Child/Youth Status:

- ☐ Permanent Ward, MCI PA 220
☐ Delinquent Ward, PA 150
☐ Dual Ward, PA 220 and PA 150
☐ Temporary Court Ward, PA 224

SECTION I - To Be Completed by Reporting Persons:

2. Child/Youth Name (Last, First, Middle)		3. Date of Birth		4. Age	
5. DHS Case Number		6. Court File Number		7. Date Youth Left Placement	
8. Time Youth Left Placement		9. Other Identifying Feature (Scars, Clothing, Etc.)		10. Hair Color	
11. Eye Color		12. Height		13. Weight	
14. Race/Ethnic/Gender Information		15. Risk Assessment (If any, notify law enforcement and explain below:)			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> M F </div> <div> <div>White</div> <div>Black</div> <div>Native American/Alaskan Native</div> <div>Hispanic</div> <div>Asian/Pacific Islander</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>		<input type="checkbox"/> Is serious risk to community/self <input type="checkbox"/> Is 11 years of age or younger <input type="checkbox"/> Is an escapee, PA 150 committed to high security setting <input type="checkbox"/> Foul play is suspected 			
16. Youth May Have Escaped To:		17. Name and Relationship		18. Phone Number	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Home <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain		19. Address		20. City	
21. State		22. Zip Code		23. Parent's/Guardian's Name	
24. Phone Number		25. Date Notified of Escape		26. Parent/Guardian Complete Address	
27. City		28. State		29. Zip Code	
30. Name of Placement Agency (Youth Missing From)		31. Agency Phone Number		32. Placement Agency Worker's Name	
33. Date DHS Contacted		34. Time DHS Contacted		35. Date Notification Mailed	
36. Name of Reporting Person		37. Signature			

SECTION II - To Be Completed by DHS Worker:

38. Dates and Actions Taken To Locate Missing Youth:					
39. DHS Worker Name			40. DHS Worker Phone Number		
41. Name of Law Enforcement Agency Notified			42. Date Law Enforcement Notified		43. Time Law Enforcement Notified
44. Police Report Number		45. Police Teletype Number		46. Ward Entered On Lien?	
47. Lien Code Used		48. All involved parties have been notified that youth was found		49. Apprehension Date	
50. Current Placement		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> 8100 <input type="checkbox"/> 0029	

AUTHORITY: P.A. 150 of 1974 as amended 803.306
COMPLETION: Mandatory
PENALTY: Child/Youth a name will not appear on the lien.

Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.

Distribution: Law Enforcement, DSW Court, Parent/Guardian, Placement Agency

**UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE REPORT TO
COURT/LAW ENFORCEMENT
Michigan Family Independence Agency**

Case Name					
Case Number		SWSS FAJ Log #		Date	
County	District	Section	Unit	Worker	Court File Number

Child/Youth Legal Status			Date of Birth		Age
Race/Ethnic/Gender Information					Date Youth Left Placement
Other Identifying Features (Scars, Clothing, Etc)			Hair Color	Eye Color	Height Weight

Risk Management

☐ Is at serious risk
 ☐ Is 11 years of age or younger
 ☐ Foul Play is suspected

there must some explanation:

Youth may be with <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain	Name and Relationship Address	Phone Number
---	---	---------------------

Possible Destination

Parent/Guardian Name	Phone Number
-----------------------------	---------------------

Parent/Guardian Complete Address

Parent/Guardian Name	Phone Number
-----------------------------	---------------------

Parent/Guardian Complete Address

Name of Placement (Youth Missing From)	Placement Phone Number
---	-------------------------------

Placement Complete Address

Dates and Actions Taken to Locate Missing Youth

FIA Worker Name	FIA Worker Phone Number
------------------------	--------------------------------

Name of Law Enforcement Agency Notified	Missing Person Report (LIEN Form) Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
--	---

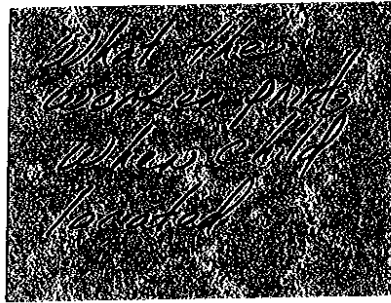
Signature

AUTHORITY: P.A 150 OF 1974 AS AMENDED 803.306 COMPLETION: Mandatory PENALTY: Child/Youth name will not appear on the LIEN	The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.
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**UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE REPORT TO
COURT/LAW ENFORCEMENT
Michigan Family Independence Agency**

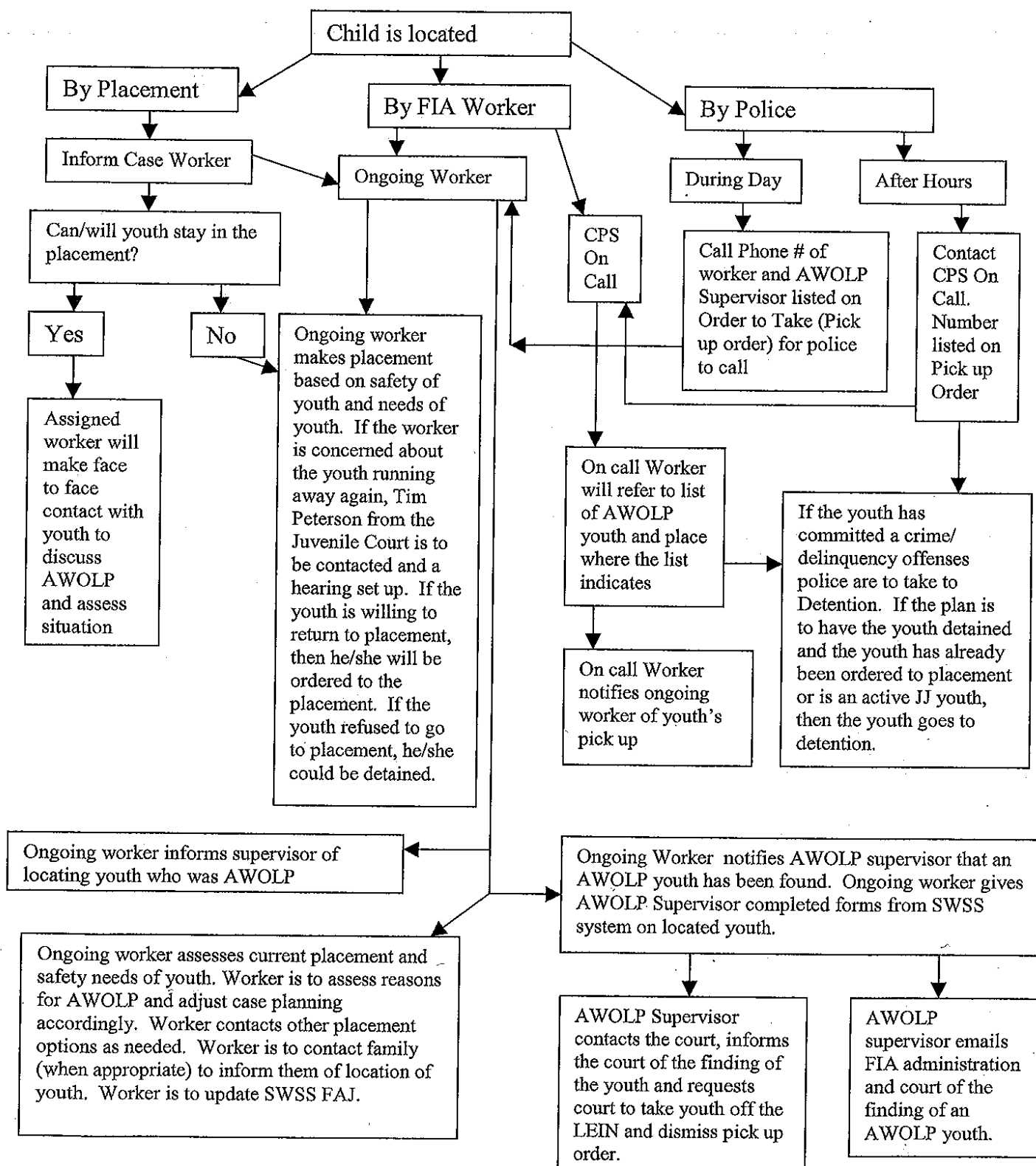
Case Name					
Case Number		SWSS FAJ Log #			Date
County	District	Section	Unit	Worker	Court File Number

Child Located	Current Placement
FIA Worker Name	FIA Worker Phone Number
Signature	



AUTHORITY: P.A 150 OF 1974 AS AMENDED 803.306 COMPLETION: Mandatory PENALTY: Child/Youth name will not appear on the LIEN	The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.
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Saginaw County Family Independence Agency
Procedures on When a AWOLP Youth is Located
10-01-2003



**State Court Administrative Office-Child Welfare Services
EVALUATION FORM - webcast**

**Children Absent from Court-Ordered Placement
Without Legal Permission (AWOLP):
A Best Practices Forum**

September 8, 2006
Michigan Hall of Justice

At the close of the seminar, please complete the following evaluation and return it to any staff member of the State Court Administrative Office-Child Welfare Services Division.

For the following questions, check the box that best describes you thoughts:

1. Overall Content of the Forum:

- Presented information new to me.
- The examples and activities in the presentation will help me apply the knowledge and/or skills in my job.
- Presentation style and format supported my learning.
- The participant materials (video, handouts, workbooks, etc) enhanced my knowledge and/or skills.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Successful Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Children Absent from Placement:

- Presented information new to me.
- I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
- Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Department of Human Services/Law Enforcement Collaboration:

- Presented information new to me.
- I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
- Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Presentation of Kent County Panel:

- Presented information new to me.
- I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
- Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Presentation of Genesee County Panel:

- Presented information new to me.
- I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
- Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Presentation of Saginaw County Panel:

Presented information new to me.
I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Presentation of Wayne County Panel:

Presented information new to me.
I will use information from this presentation in my practice.
Presentation style and format supported my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What information was of most value to you?

9. What (if any) information was of least value to you?

10. Additional Comments regarding this training:

11. Comments and recommendations for future presentations:

12. What is your primary role: (check one)

☐ Judge/Referee

☐ L-GAL/appointed counsel for parent

☐ Other attorney

☐ Child welfare caseworker

☐ Law Enforcement

☐ Administrator

☐ Other: please specify: _____

13. How many years have you been in your current role? _____

14. Your gender: (Response optional)

☐ Female

☐ Male

15. How do you identify yourself? (Response optional)

☐ Native American

☐ Caucasian/White

☐ Asian Pacific Islander

☐ Arab American

☐ Hispanic/Latino/a

☐ Other, please specify: _____

☐ African American/Black

16. County/counties of employment: _____

Please complete and fax to:
Michigan Judicial Institute
Attn: Anne DeMarco
517-373-7615

THANK YOU!